

*The Convictions of a  
Grandfather  
by  
Robert Grant*

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THE CONVICTIONS OF A  
GRANDFATHER



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BY  
ROBERT GRANT

AUTHOR OF "THE REFLECTIONS OF A MARRIED MAN,"  
"THE OPINIONS OF A PHILOSOPHER," ETC.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS  
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THE CONVICTIONS OF  
A GRANDFATHER



# THE CONVICTIONS OF A GRANDFATHER

## I

WHOEVER has set down his reflections as a married man and promulgated his opinions as a philosopher and attended his own silver wedding may be well preserved twenty years later, but is more than likely to be a grandfather and disposed to regard life from a patriarchal stand-point through gold-rimmed spectacles of wisdom. In my particular case the gold-rimmed spectacles are metaphorical. Yet I am a grandfather; and therefore the burden rests on me to demonstrate that my conclusions concerning what is or has been or is to be are not merely old-fashioned, but that the fountain of perpetual youth still bubbles in an anatomy the arteries of which presumably have begun to harden. For the world will not pause to listen to grumpy grandfathers out of touch with it, even though

they be philosophers who have reflected on and sounded all the phases of matrimony.

Those of you who were present at my silver wedding, who knew me in my salad days of wedlock and have followed my dear wife Josephine and me through the blissful, if sometimes perplexing, vicissitudes of marital experience, will remember that I was already a grandfather when we parted. Made one through the birth of a son to my second daughter, Winona, herself a maiden convert to Christian Science, but weaned from exclusive devotion to its theories by her marriage to Harold Bruce, an attractive young man of means with political aspirations; made one subsequently from time to time by her and by my other children, of whom it behooves me to state for the benefit of the uninitiated that I have three. My namesake—little Fred, as we used to call him—a member of the banking house of Leggatt and Paine, awarded a position in that office immediately on graduation, as some of you will recollect, because of his proficiency and grit at foot-ball (not scholarship). Our second son, David, engrossed by science, whose vocation is



germs, whose avocation electricity. Our eldest daughter, Josie, a sweet girl, named for, and closely resembling, in my opinion, her mother at the same age, except for her red hair, the wife of James Perkins, the rising architect. If Winona is known as the beauty of the family, Josie is distinguished by her social tact and charm; and their mental traits also furnish a pleasing contrast, for my eldest daughter's cast of mind is engagingly conventional, whereas her sister, rather to her mother's dismay, is prone to entertain advanced ideas, with some of which I secretly sympathize. As for my sons, both are married, though David procrastinated so long that we began to fear he might remain an old bachelor, and both are fathers. It is not the moment to describe the attractions of their wives, lest too many names and individuals at once breed confusion.

We are a harmonious and lively family circle; but when my sons and two sons-in-law get arguing together, as sometimes happens after dinner at my house, four poles of thought are represented, of which not infrequently I am consti-

tuted the umpire. This keeps me on my guard against harboring moss-grown conclusions supposed to be indicative of a grandfather, and causes my grandchildren to prick up their ears at the discovery that one who has lived so long should not be moribund.

"You keep so abreast of the times, dear," said my wife Josephine the other day, "that, a generation or two ago, your progressiveness would have justified your sons-in-law in shutting you up as a lunatic."

I understood what she meant. Let it be said that Josephine, with all her sense and keenness of perception, is constitutionally partial to conservatism, and prefers the well-trodden highway to the unblazed mountain path which attracts the sociological pioneer. Indeed, fond admirer as I am of the other sex and wonderful as it is at making the most or the best of what some man has found out, I am not altogether sure after a long life that woman has ever really originated anything. But this may merely prove either that I ought to be shut up or am sadly in need of the gold-rimmed spectacles already referred to.

Perhaps Josephine's conscience pricked her, for she hastened to anticipate my response to her sally at the expense of my eternal youth by adding:

"One would have to be really crazy or it couldn't happen now because of the legal safeguards. But you must admit, Fred, that most people at our age are content to have the world go on as it is."

"Whereas I——"

"Yes, it's splendid you're not like that. But don't forget, dear, it was I who had faith that we should fly. You were always sceptical concerning air-ships. I admit, though," she added, graciously, "that about most things—like the brotherhood of man, for instance—you are wonderfully progressive."

Possibly because of this sly reference to my incredulity regarding aerial navigation, I dismissed the subject by remarking, "I have never been sufficiently wealthy at any time, dear, to tempt my sons-in-laws to deprive me of my liberty."

This had a sententious sound, and it may be

that I sighed. My wife pondered my words for some moments, which showed that she did not intend to controvert them, and presently as the result of her reverie replied:

“I do not believe, Fred, that real wealth would have made us the least bit happier.”

This was sweet of her; especially as Josephine, though conventional, never indulges in that form of cant which seeks spiritual consolation from the lack of what is really desired. She was merely expressing aloud her satisfaction with the treatment she had received from life during the holy state of matrimony and was continuing to receive as a grandmother. To be abreast of the times and happy, yet not really rich, may seem anomalous to a generation accustomed to associate any one in the van with ownership of touring cars, and to savor of socialism to magnates apt to suspect those who entertain modern ideas as possessing nothing but debts. Yet that phrase of hers—“real wealth”—seemed to me such a happy epitome of changed conditions that I instantly adopted it as a philosophic term, and, musing in my turn before I answered, thus



afforded my wife time to exonerate herself from even the appearance of smugness by remarking:

"You remember, Fred, the reply of the woman asked why she was buying such an elaborate wrap?—'To ride in other people's automobiles.' Of course we do ride occasionally in other people's autos; but even if we didn't, I am sure that it would make no difference in our happiness. Don't you think so?"

"Not the remotest; we couldn't have been happier," and I accompanied this prompt reassurance with an embrace, for Josephine resents, now that she is a grandmother, quite as much as before, what she terms by pretence my niggardliness in kisses. She delights in being a grandmother, but is decidedly sensitive at being called one, and enjoys any illusion which leads her to forget that all her contemporaries are growing old.

I knew what she had in mind. The automobile was merely a figure of speech. We could have scraped together the means to buy one, but were patiently waiting for a prophesied crash in automobiles as the consequence of mort-

gaging premises to pay for them, and thus far prices had not fallen. What Josephine meant was that wealth as it existed when we were young and set up house-keeping has become barely a competency, and that a new generation has introduced a new standard of living by virtue of those huge industrial fortunes which have deprived the word "million" of distinction unless multiplied.

It is typical of a grandfather to imagine that everything has changed more completely since he occupied the centre of the stage than during any other equal phase of the human drama. Yet I am confident that it is not an exaggeration to assert that the world has moved faster, and the social changes of various sorts have been more striking during the half century since Josephine and I were married than during any corresponding period in the lives of our predecessors; and more noticeably in the interval since we celebrated our silver wedding and felt ourselves a hundred than before. From that day, to be sure, we have been spectators chiefly, whereas previously we were engrossed by the active cares

of life. But, after due allowance for a grandfatherly and grandmotherly propensity to study the present in the light of the past, Josephine and I share the opinion that the new generation is astonishingly different from our own, and not merely because it revels in the time and space annihilating conveniences of electricity and the lately redeemed promise of the conquest of the air. These are but symbols, though it may truly be said that a larger degree of responsibility rests on the telephone and the automobile than on any other material agent since the development of the steam-engine. What we have in mind is a matter of spirit—of point of view. And in promoting the changes there apparent what factor has been more potent than this real wealth, as Josephine termed it?

To identify myself further, let me state that I am a lawyer with an active practice, but not so lucrative that the expenses of my family have not nearly kept pace with my fairly large professional income. I have had my financial ups and downs, but my bills have always been paid promptly on the tenth of each month and I have

managed to lay by something—a mere trifle. Certain honors have come to me. I delivered a Fourth of July oration; I am the President of our Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and Trustee of our Art Museum. Some years ago I was invited to run for Congress as an Independent in a hopelessly Republican District and narrowly escaped election. The driver of the local sight-seeing automobile, when he reaches the street on which I live, bawls through his megaphone, “residence of Frederick ——, the well-known jury lawyer”; and although he points out as mine the stately mansion belonging to a wealthy acquaintance because it looks, I suppose, as if it ought to belong to me, the mention of my name in this public manner shows that I am not without standing in the community.

Moreover, my tastes and those of my family are social and not too severe. We are not unbending, but we also have our traditions, and have adopted neither “pleased to meet you” nor “mentality” as household words. That well-known club woman and publicist, Mrs. Mabel

Flanders Foote, whose acquaintance we made at Ocean-Lea, where we habitually pass the summer, thought of us as "society people" before she knew us better. She has told us so herself since.

Ocean-Lea, as some of you may know, combines delightfully the country and the sea. We selected it years and years ago because off the beaten path; and latterly we have continued to spend our summers there at the behest of the younger generation, whose friends have discovered it also and have made it decidedly fashionable. Mrs. Foote came thither seeking a bracing air, yet a spot where she could lecture occasionally to pecuniary advantage for the uplifting of a worldly summer population and thus pay her board. The cottage which she chose was within a stone's-throw of ours, which is little more than a bungalow.

It seems that her prepossessions of us were favorable; though she was suspicious of the way Josephine did her hair. But the revelation that the artistic country house, visible from her windows, with gay week-end parties constantly

coming and going in automobiles, belonged to my daughter Winona, dispelled, for the time being, her hopeful conception of us as plain people on whom she might drop in whenever she felt like talking. After she also found out that we had pleasant social relations with the family of Hugh Armitt Dawson, the genuine multi-millionaire, at whose princely establishment, less than a mile away, the doings were popularly conceived to be inordinately extravagant, if not vicious, she drew in the tentacles of friendship with the brusque celerity of a horrified sea-anemone. Nor did she refrain from exclaiming, "What! Those painfully rich and purposeless people?"

Mrs. Mabel Flanders Foote has become a valued friend. We understand her and she understands us. She is an intelligent and suggestive if somewhat monotonously earnest woman, whose opinions I shall have occasion frequently to quote. The most curious factor in our mutual appreciation is that it is a by-product of the intimacy formed that summer between her and my daughter Winona, whom at a bird's-eye view she had convicted of social levity.

It seems that Mrs. Foote's aspersion of the Hugh Armitt Dawsons was addressed to my wife Josephine, who in a quiet way has always the courage of her convictions, and who contented herself at the moment with the remark, "If you knew them better you would hold a very different opinion." But she straightway entered on a campaign of education, the first step of which was to invite this stern critic to accompany her to call on her daughter. This was on the day after Mrs. Foote had delivered at the Ocean-Lea town-hall, by what was termed general request (subscriptions steadfastly solicited at two dollars per ticket) her new lecture on American Womanhood, and was still bristling with her subject. The Dawsons had subscribed liberally, but their seats were occupied by the governess and some of the servants. Josephine and I lived too near the beneficiary not to go, and I succeeded by means of a bribe in inducing both my daughters, a daughter-in-law, and a granddaughter to accompany us, believing that we all might imbibe some new ideas.

The lecturer, having pointed out in the course



of her thesis that in the early days of our Republic most of the wearing apparel and many of the comestibles, now the product of manufactories, were made or prepared by wives and daughters at the home, and having touched on the toiling masses and their present propensity for canned food, continued with the following antithesis: "At the other extreme may be found a large class of women who, with the coffers of husband and father filled to overflowing with the results of the successful management of what was formerly woman's work, find themselves with a possession hitherto unknown to woman—leisure time. These women have enlarged their homes, increased the adornment of their persons, and given themselves up to the pursuit of pleasure and to a life of self-indulgence."

The mental processes of women have all the swooping qualities of air-ships. I am not referring to the lecturer's tirade, but to the working of my wife's mind when I happened by way of reminiscence to point a slightly jocose moral in her presence apropos of Mrs. Foote's subsequent conversion. I was saying:



"Your hint to Mrs. Dawson was a master-stroke, my dear. The glamour of a luncheon there was irresistible."

"You mustn't put it so grossly, Fred," she murmured. "The luncheon was educational on both sides. You appreciate as fully as I the interesting subtleties of the situation; how Mrs. Foote went away ready to acknowledge that nine-tenths of the world can not know how the other tenth lives merely by newspaper hearsay, and they were surprised to find what an agreeable woman she was."

And then it was that Josephine's mind went off at a tangent and made the aerial swoop referred to. For she suddenly became pensive and after laughing softly said, "I must admit, Fred, that I took her that day to see Winona in fear and trembling, not having chosen to compromise myself by warning the dear child that we were coming; and it certainly seemed providential that we hit on a morning when Winona had her little ones grouped around her, quietly attentive as mice, and was reading them, 'How to Know the Wild Flowers,' with specimens they had

picked the day before on the table beside her. You may call that a master-stroke, if you choose. Of course it showed Winona at her best—the real Winona.”

Josephine, as she paused, sighed involuntarily, and I was brute enough to supply the ellipsis by adding:

“Whereas——”

But she cut me short. “You needn’t go on. It isn’t necessary to elucidate or enumerate.”

I obeyed orders, choosing not to press the matter, as I knew that Josephine was a little sensitive, for the reason that her eldest granddaughter—our daughter Josie’s child, Dorothy Perkins—had been caught red-lipped with a cigarette in her mouth only the previous week, and the shortcomings of posterity loomed large for the time being. Besides, I had no wish to disturb the serene reflection that we—or rather Josephine—had been constituted an agent of Providence in opening the eyes of the social classes concerning each other. I surmise that Mrs. Foote may have expected to find Winona playing “bridge” at high noon, but she was cer-

tainly unprepared for the discovery that Mr. Hugh Armitt Dawson was not an embodiment of all the fleshly vices under the guise of a fashionable exterior, but a man of personal simplicity and intellectual tastes. During the luncheon itself, which though formally served and deliciously cooked, lacked spectacular features, I could see that she was endeavoring to adapt her conversation to the level of a rank materialist—a sort of human boa constrictor, whose ruling passion was to swallow creatures smaller than itself by the process of gambling. With this stricture in her mind, it must have been surprising to find herself listening to an account of his library, especially of two collections, one comprising every edition and the entire bibliography of a favorite English poet, the other all the extant printed matter throughout the civilized world bearing on co-operative industrial partnerships.

I am not without suspicions that Mrs. Dawson varies her behavior according to her company. It would not astonish me to hear that she had given orders that cigarettes should not be offered to the ladies on this occasion. In the

interval after luncheon, before the men returned, it seems that she talked of pictures and of gardens in a manner so delightful as to leave no doubt in any mind that she was an ardent lover of both, and afterward she revealed a familiarity with what her guest was seeking to accomplish for homeless working-girls which could not have been simulated, however much of a social chameleon she may be. Mrs. Foote's conversion really was accomplished when, with her host and hostess on either side, she made a grand tour of the greenhouses, stables, parkway, Italian garden, and terraces. I have heard her tell the story: "It mortified me to find" (to quote her own words) "with what scientific thoroughness they had approached many subjects in regard to which I had imagined them to be misinformed and totally indifferent. After all, one must not forget that they too are Americans."

It is a pleasant reflection that, as the result of Josephine's campaign of education, Mrs. Foote has not only borrowed her mentor's shibboleth, "If you knew them better, you would alter your opinion," but has tempered the ob-

jectionable passage in her lecture on "American Womanhood," so as to afford a bird's-eye glimpse of Winona reading "How to Know the Wild Flowers" to her children and the admirable saving graces of certain multi-millionaires. If in public she still throws upon the wealthy the burden of exculpating themselves from the popular presumption of their worthlessness, she does not conceal (from us) that her new lecture, "What the Social Classes Owe to One Another," was directly inspired by her enlightenment. In this she enlarges upon her epigram, "they too are Americans," by admonishing her hearers to remember that the rich are really a portion of themselves, the moral of which might be said to be that self-righteousness and envy are second cousins.

And yet (which explains why Mrs. Mabel Flanders Foote's conversion is immediately relevant to the topic "real wealth"), having succeeded in correcting her misapprehensions that those who think in millions and purchase precious stones and old masters with the freedom which the rest of us associate with the expenditure of

a nickel, are devoid of domestic virtues, I cannot as the grandfather of fifteen grandchildren, whose excursions and friendships among the abnormally rich have afforded me the opportunity to survey the social arena at short range, blind myself to various modern manifestations which seem directly or at least partially traceable to the influence of inordinate possessions.

## II

“**B**UT what do you regard as inordinate possessions?” asked Josephine, with whom I was discussing the subject.

I realized at once the pertinency of the inquiry, for it compelled a reflective pause, which my wife saw fit to terminate by the pensive words —“It’s so hard to tell. When we started house-keeping forty years ago any one with half a million was considered rich, and a millionaire was more or less of a curiosity. Nowadays, people with merely a million are only comfortably well off, and among multi-millionaires themselves I dare say that even five millions are regarded as genteel millionaire poverty.

“And yet,” I interjected, by way of rounding out the contrast, “my father used to tell me that in his day one hundred thousand dollars was a fortune.”

“Yes, dear.” Josephine ruminated a moment before adding, “I’m inclined to think, Fred, that

after about five, or possibly seven, millions it doesn't really matter much except for the purpose of owning railroads or endowing colleges and libraries. Take Mr. Dawson, for instance. Of course he's disgustingly rich, as Mrs. Foote terms it even since her conversion; but I don't suppose he is able to afford more than all the necessary things and all the things he really doesn't need. Don't you see what I mean? Besides several establishments the family can have tiaras and numerous automobiles and buy now and then an old master. But I don't imagine he has a quarter of fifty millions, for instance, and presumably from the stand-point of those who have—and take the entire world, there is quite a sprinkling of them—he is a—er—pauper."

"Sh!" I ejaculated. "You shock me. You seem to forget, my dear, that I was once indicted by an indignant press for intimating that a man with an income of ten thousand dollars a year could get more out of life than one with fifteen hundred."

"I remember. That was twenty years ago. It isn't much to-day. You know, Fred, that I



don't care a straw about all those things—the establishments, tiaras, and the rest. I never have. I don't want them. And it is one of the satisfactions of my life that my children have had to make their own way and were not hampered at the start by being disgustingly or inordinately or even respectably rich. Winona, to be sure, was so lucky as to marry a man with money enough for them to live comfortably. But the others have had to wait. Think how much pleasure they would have lost if they could buy everything they saw and satisfy every longing by drawing a cheque. Would we have missed for anything our planning, economizing, and even scraping? And I'm sure it's the same with them. It's the struggle that's the fun."

I have already indicated that Josephine has no propensity for cant. Nor did it seem necessary to call her attention to the slight inconsistency contained in her reference to Winona, which I was sure she would be able to explain. I was proud that her simplicity and sterling sense had been proof against the wear and tear of a maximum ten thousand dollars a year, and that the

dazzle of genteel millionaire poverty had not obscured the truth first discovered by Midas, that happiness is apt to be disproportionate to the ability to have everything. But the desire to resume the thread of our discussion, which had slightly swerved from the central point, and in the same breath to allude to a phase of the struggle which she appeared to me to be overlooking, led me to remark after a few words of sympathetic acquiescence:

“But what satisfied us is too apt not to satisfy the rising generation.”

By using the impersonal phrase, rising generation, I was able to shield myself from the reproach of maligning my own offspring, being well aware that Josephine, though candidly critical of her children if left to her own devices, resents every one else's strictures, even mine. By recourse to a comprehensive expression I conveyed my meaning, which was aimed far more directly at other people's children than at my own, and at the same time gave her the opportunity to take the lead in a more personal application if she chose.

"That's the dreadful side to it," she murmured with almost a tragic air. "And it's everywhere. Ours are not the only ones. Indeed, Fred, everything considered, I think the children have done remarkably well. Of course, Winona entertains a great deal. And I admit all four have automobiles. How David and even Josie manage with other things besides is a mystery. It seems their own children insisted on it. The younger generation has the automobile on the brain, and you and I are nearly the only people in the United States who do not own one. And it isn't only autos; one can't make a scape-goat of them; it's everything. And it's not only our class, it's every class; and so it goes. Yet all the time everything is rising in price, often by leaps and bounds—servants, house-rent, eggs, butter, milk, and all the necessities of life, except, possibly, oil, sugar, and cheap ready-made clothing. There's some plausible excuse given for every increase—as in the case of milk, for instance, it costs so much to keep it free from germs. But if prices don't stop going up and everybody insisting on having everything, what will become presently

not of the poor man, but of everyone who is not inordinately rich?"

"You look at me, Josephine, as if you thought I were a political economist. I am merely a social philosopher; a spectator, and chronicler like yourself, but without your flashes of genius."

"Pshaw! But you are a man. It seems to me that some man ought to have discovered the root of the matter long before this—whether it's the tariff or the increase in the production of gold as you call it. Most of the so-called intelligent men, when one talks of ruinous prices, answer serenely, 'it's the increase of gold,' and stop short as if that were a stone wall."

This had been my own experience, and I did not see fit to allude to the sardonic stare with which a banker once regarded me when I asked him why no attempt was made to limit the output of the standard of value. He evidently considered me as next of kin to a lunatic.

"Josephine," I answered a little loftily, using a current aphorism, "when gold is cheap commodities are dear; which means that lands,

hereditaments, provisions, and automobiles are more valuable than money.

“If no man is able to discover the remedy, it’s time for some woman to try her hand at it. There must be a way of preventing prices from going up continuously. Our great-grandchildren will be bankrupt otherwise.”

Although I have no fossilized preconceptions concerning the limits of woman’s genius, political economy has been so exclusively a domain of man that I hedged between acquiescence and dissent by the glittering generality, “The problem seems to baffle the wisest heads of the universe. We are told that what is true here regarding the cost of living is true the world over.”

There is a certain amount of comfort to be derived from the assurance that any given state of affairs is not peculiar. It tends to substitute a more philosophic train of thought for personal or local misgivings. If what is true here is also true not merely of native conditions, but of those in China and Peru, a grandfather may well pause before he indicts the rising generation on the strength of personal observation. Yet the

facts within the range of one's own experience are always eloquent, and I am free to confess that in this particular case enumeration puts the rest of the world and philosophy in the shade when Josephine and I attempt to inventory the things considered essential to the comfort of the descendants of the people we know. Not only have the sheer luxuries of fifty years ago become the necessities of to-day, but the world finds difficulty in doing without a large variety of requirements which were either non-existent or had not been imagined when we were young. Here is a casual list which Josephine provided almost in a single breath, together with her (or my) comments in the margin:

NECESSARIES FOR AN ATTRACTIVE YOUNG COUPLE  
WITH SEVERAL CHILDREN, BENT ON ECONOMY,  
BUT AMBITIOUS TO DO WELL :

Fresh butter, thick cream, and grapefruit.  
What is life without them?

Separate tiled bath-rooms with electric light  
and modern plumbing.

Indispensable; but in our time one bath-room  
sufficed for the family.

Numerous maids at five to ten dollars per week, according to the laws of competition, accentuated by feverish fears that the supply may give out altogether.

How are they going to get them otherwise? We paid half the price and obtained better service.

White paint, white dresses, white gloves.

Hygienic and cheerful, but need frequent renewing.

Five dollars for tickets every time one takes one's wife to the theatre.

One has to pay a ticket agent or make up one's mind a week ahead. We used to pay one dollar and fifty cents at the box-office.

Golf balls, seventy-five cents apiece.

They used to be forty cents, and we play the same old game.

Golf club, eighty dollars per year, and an extra charge to play golf.

Curious logic, but a sad fact.

Champagne whenever one entertains.

(Josephine.) Totally unnecessary. A ridiculous extravagance.

Flowers, ditto.

(Fred.) Ornamental, but a woman's fancy.



An automobile.

How do they manage to have one? We gave our children bicycles.

Chauffeur after husband has tired of taking care of it.

Winona has a treasure who will take his meals in the kitchen. Most of them won't.

A trip to Europe every now and then to recuperate.

Plus the duties one has to pay on what is brought home.

Family portraits.

Rarely successful.

The telephone.

Economizer of time and distance, but still an extra.

Fur coats for the household to ride in autos and sit at foot-ball games.

Is it better to run in debt or catch cold? ,

Savings for a flying-machine, with a careful eye to the future.

Life-insurance is so slow.

In contrasting the modern house, especially the country house, with its spacious, luxurious



devices for making everybody comfortable, with that of fifty years ago, one is reminded of the plaintive domestic inquiry in "Alice in Wonderland," regarding the case of the sand beach:

"If seven maids with seven mops  
Swept it for half a year,  
Do you suppose, the walrus said,  
That they could get it clear?  
I doubt it, said the carpenter,  
And shed a bitter tear."

Josephine properly omitted week-end house parties from her list of modern necessities, presumably for the reason that the typical young couple she had in mind were beneficiaries, not donors, of this form of entertainment. All that the guests at week-end house parties require are fur coats and attractive personalities. It is even possible sometimes to borrow a fur coat, and a truly hospitable host is expected to keep an extra supply. But if there is one factor more than another which has revolutionized social life by providing scope to the rich and a new and wider horizon to the young, it is the week-end house party.

When Josephine and I were young a spring or autumn visit to friends in the country was somewhat of an event. We looked forward to a certain amount of personal discomfort as regards warmth and bathing facilities in exchange for husking bees and the beauties of nature. How delightful were those rambles through the woods when the fresh verdure of spring gladdened the eyes, or we picked a winding path through the dry leaves and chestnut burrs on Indian summer days which emulated perfection! Yet how frigid were those old-fashioned bedrooms, with their thin partitions, on a frosty night, and how the windows stuck and rattled! An occasional ride on horseback with one's sweetheart was a favor, for it was necessary to spare the horses; and reading aloud, twenty questions, or telling ghost stories were the favorite diversions following a high tea limited to two courses.

One must be a grandfather to realize completely the contrast. Do you happen to know our granddaughter, Dorothy Perkins? I think you must, by sight, at any rate, for her picture is so constantly in the newspapers. A very

pretty girl—so every one says—the eldest child of my daughter Josie, who, as I believe I have intimated, is a sweetly conventional woman and was at the same age sensitive and rather retiring. There is no doubt that of all our granddaughters, and we have at least half a dozen, we are expected to be the proudest of Dorothy. She is a great social success to begin with, which is on her own merits, for her father, though a successful architect, is far from wealthy. One reason why she seems to be such a success is that she is so natural—as her friends say: is on such easy terms with the young men (“jollies” them the phrase is), calls them all by their Christian names and is what is termed such a thorough sport. This means that she is extremely proficient at games, tennis, especially, though she plays golf, rides horses man fashion, steers an auto, and sails a thirty-footer equally well. She wears queer-looking garments to meet the exigencies of exercise, which include short corduroy skirts, top boots, masculine neckwear, long woolly coats and squash hats; so it is not always easy to distinguish her at a distance from my grandson. But

she is very amiable and popular. Queerly enough her mother dotes on everything she does and assures me confidently, when I occasionally hazard surprise at Dorothy's unconventional doings, that girls are "different" nowadays, and that she merely emphasizes the prevailing type.

Or do you know my namesake, Frederick 3d, my son Fred's eldest boy? Possibly not, for young men after leaving college are not so conspicuous as the girls. He was no less prominent in athletics than his father before him, and shortly before graduation was offered a salaried position as pitcher by two professional base-ball teams—a tribute which distinguished him at once from the herd of his contemporaries. He resisted, however, the temptation to remain in what is termed the lime-light, and is now busily employed downtown, a vigorous, manly looking young fellow, and like his cousin, Dorothy Perkins, a social success. It is, indeed, because of their exceptionally engaging social qualities, as reported to me, that I single these young people out from the rest of my grandchildren.

Yet I rarely see either of them. When I visit

their homes on Saturday or Sunday they are never there. The parental excuses, which are almost pathetic, have become stereotyped: "Dorothy will be sorry to miss you, father, but she has gone to the Flaggs for Sunday. One of their week-end house parties in their large, new country house. Ten girls and ten young men." "Your namesake is almost as much of a stranger to us as to you. This is the eighth Sunday in succession that he has been away. We expected he would be here, but at ten o'clock last evening, Beverly Gore came for him in an automobile; what could he do? Now that he is working so hard he needs all the fresh air and exercise he can get. But just as he was slamming the front door, he put his head in and shouted, 'Give my love to grandpa.' Wasn't it sweet of him? You can't blame him after that."

Surely not. These maternal explanations would convince an ogre, and a grandfather ought to be the most indulgent of beings. The plea for fresh air and recreation is not to be gainsaid. It is both natural and sensible that the young should yearn to exchange the confines of the

city, where the dust is laid by oil and the tall silk hat is obsolete only in ultra-fashionable circles, for the freedom and freshness of rustic or suburban surroundings. Why does the vendor of city houses for the well-to-do newly married repine? Because of the exodus from town to this or that settlement within a radius of thirty miles in search of breathing space. Electricity by superseding the flaring bedroom candle and annihilating distance has brought them into such close touch with metropolitan conveniences that residence in the country the year round becomes no hardship. Their fashionable forefathers left their city homes for ninety days at a summer resort, returning punctually before the dreaded equinoctial storm in September. Those who own both town and country house to-day lengthen from year to year their separation from bricks and asphalt, so that departure now antedates the coming of the May-flower (or tax collector), and return is protracted beyond the Harvard-Yale foot-ball match until almost Christmas.

From this reasonable premise that one's home for nine months in the year should be com-

fortable, it is easy to argue that abundant space demands greater luxury. So one pleasant extravagance succeeds another and the walrus's seven maids with seven mops soon constitute merely genteel convenience. Not only have the well-to-do newly married appropriated the suburbs, but the really rich have rediscovered the country, and spread themselves upon it opulently. Their modern establishments ape and outvie those of the English country gentlemen. But the owners lack the ties and traditions of their prototype. They are neither magisterial landlords nor patronizing almoners in partnership with an ancient church, working through obsequious curates. To the rank and file of the subsidized neighborhood they remain "those queer multi-millionaires with money to burn who bought Foster's timber-land," and by so doing raised the dignity of that once pitiful asset, the abandoned farm, to the level of a gilt-edged security. Yet what a godsend these extravagant new-comers have been to many a small country town rusting out from debt and the departure of its young people for the cities. The cry



“back to the farm” is reinforced by the thrifty hope of having something else to sell. Hence the more energetic and less grudging stifle their emotions by raising produce and chickens for the nourishment of the invaders; yet observe with a mixture of disapproval, curiosity, and enjoyment the obliteration of their landmarks by terraced gardens, ornamental preserves, golf links, tennis-courts, and the smoothed, broadened highway over which speed and thunder myriads of dust-provoking automobiles—in one of the largest and swiftest of which are sure to be found my grandchildren, Dorothy Perkins and Frederick 3d.

Have you ever attended a week-end house party for young people at a home of the really rich? If so you cannot fail to have been impressed by the hum of vitality, the whirl of excitement, and the complete lack of opportunity for the spiritual restfulness which former generations have sought in the presence of nature. Instead of sauntering two by two, lover-like couples wooing the seclusion of the wood paths and lanes, youthful society to-day travels in bunches, ever



eager to be on the move, to be transported swiftly from one form of exercise to another until the body becomes pleasantly wearied, then fed gastronomically, and lest some one be bored, cajoled with expensive social novelties by prodigal hosts bent on pleasing. In the language of its vernacular there must be something "doing" all the time; which means a succession of open-air sports until dark, followed by a gay dinner-dance which may or may not compete in lateness with those of the city and prolongs to the last gasp the programme of rush and tension with which the day began.

What becomes of the simple life in this process? What room for books, contemplative silence, and self-scrutiny? These inquiries force themselves upon us against our wills, for it is only a grumpy grandfather who seeks to fasten upon those who come after the reproach of degeneration. Indeed, Josephine and I prefer to echo stoutly our daughter's phrase concerning these young people that, as a prevailing type, they are merely "different." Recall the healthy glowing physique of both sexes; their energetic, vigor-

ous movements, their entire naturalness and absence of ceremony or restraint in social intercourse, their honesty, hatred of shams, and fine animal spirits. What if my granddaughter Dorothy Perkins smokes? What if she permits young men to call her by her Christian name the second time she meets them? Every one says she could have passed the Harvard or Yale college examinations had she chosen to. What if my grandson Frederick 3d is so heedless of ownership in regard to clothing that the initials on the articles of his wardrobe include the son of the president of the United States and the janitor of his college dormitory? What if he drives a motor-car at breakneck speed, plays "bridge" at times, and continuously exaggerates the value of athletics? We are assured that his morals are far superior to those of two generations ago, and that both his mind and body are clean as a smelt.

In the face of such positive virtues the opinion that the rising generation is merely "different" may well suffice for a grandfather who would be thought progressive. When we seek an explana-

tion of the difference, surely a plausible one is to be found in the lavish expenditures of the very wealthy whose inclination for competitive splendor, egged on by that American tendency, of which we are all conscious, to deny nothing to the young lest they cease to love us, tends to debauch the rising generation by giving a false value to merely material things and by starving those channels to the brain which nourish the finer senses.

I set forth this conclusion in much the same words the other day for the benefit of my wife Josephine, remarking also that I intended to expound it at the next meeting of my dinner club, which includes men so well qualified to judge and of such varied experience as Dr. Henry Meredith, the specialist on nervous diseases, my pastor, the Rev. Bradley Mason, and Gillespie Gore (great-uncle of young Beverly Gore who has been fined three times for over-speeding), the former society beau and still a well-preserved man of fashion.

"Every word is true," said Josephine; then she continued a little plaintively, "I was per-

fectly right, Fred, in stating that one can have seven or at least five millions nowadays without being really rich. You thought at the time I was wandering from the point, but I wasn't. With less than that it isn't possible to have all the things which people to-day think essential for comfort. But," she concluded with a sigh, "it makes it hard for the poor dears with less who have got used to having so many extra things."

### III

HOW does the rising generation compare educationally with its predecessors? How do American men and women compare educationally with those of Europe? What has been the effect of modern industrial fortunes on the minds and tastes of that portion of our community which enjoys the best opportunities for education? Do the material distractions of the present day tend to diminish individual culture? These corollaries from Josephine's and my discussion concerning the influence of the really rich on the socially attractive young were propounded by me at the next meeting of my dinner club. The questions were scarcely out of my mouth before Dr. Henry Meredith, the eminent specialist on diseases of the nerves, a man still in his prime though past sixty, and an incisive reasoner on any topic, started off with a pungent fluency which suggested that here was a subject on which he had been longing to air very concrete opinions.

“The young men and women of to-day on the educational side? I am out of conceit of them. Well set-up, athletic, good-looking, young fellows—the girls, too, even better looking and just as good fellows—who do thoroughly and efficiently what they set out to do. I’m not quarrelling with their brains or their executive ability. It’s their appalling ignorance concerning the things which every educated person ought to know; which every educated person in my day did know. Have you ever tested them on literature? They own up to Kipling and Stevenson; but what of the rest? Are they intimate—as we were forty years ago—with their Shakespeare, their Bible, their ancient classics, their Gibbon? It’s not erudition I’m speaking of. I’m not referring to Thomas à Kempis or Sir Thomas More, but to the primary essentials. Intimate I repeat. Ask, off-hand, the average man or woman of your acquaintance under thirty-five, ‘What is the story of Jephtha’s daughter?’ ‘Where exactly do you find the lines, “There is a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune”?’ ‘What do you know of “Odi pro-

fanum vulgus et arceo" or "Vixi puellis nuper idoneus"? The odds are they would be struck dumb; the certainty is (and here's the real tragedy) they wouldn't be troubled if they were. And as to poetry—can they quote it by the page as I could at their age? Ask one of them to recite Lycidas by rote. Now don't tell me," he protested, looking fiercely round the table, "that poetry is dying out—that there's no poetry written nowadays. It's the old poetry I'm referring to. No, when it comes to civilized social intercourse, I find myself out of touch with the younger generation for the reason that it has ceased to be familiar with and love the things I care about."

The ball thus set flying was promptly struck back by my spiritual adviser, Rev. Bradley Mason, who, though more rigid on dogma than I permit myself to be, has a large fund of human sympathy which tends to enlarge his outlook in spite of ecclesiastical fetters.

"It's merely, Meredith, that the symbols have changed. They talk a different language."

My pastor has a pleasant voice and he spoke

ingratiatingly. But his remark elicited a caustic retort:

"Oh, yes, I know. You refer to that infernal science. I know something about science myself, thank you. I get my bread and butter out of it. But it can't supply me with culture." Whereupon Dr. Meredith added the portentous words, "So far as I can see, polite learning is being strangled to death by science and her foster child, modern philanthropy—social service as they call it nowadays."

His antagonist laughed amiably. "One thing at a time, Meredith, please." Then he carried the war into Africa with a vengeance, by remarking, "If I remember aright, you did not take honors at college in the classics."

"I stood about the middle of my class. I received the ordinary education which became a gentleman."

"Precisely. You will agree with me, I dare say, that the opportunities for advanced scholarship now offered at our colleges to the earnest student are fully tenfold greater than in our day."

"I will agree that the earnest student who in-



tends to teach for a living can get a post-graduate degree which is worth having. But that isn't the point."

"The point is that the rest of us—the men not in the first flight, who stood about the middle of the class—in our time all learned the same shibboleth. Now the corresponding men learn a variety of shibboleths. You are deceived by glamour, Meredith. Don't interrupt me and I'll tell you why."

I noticed that the physician emptied his glass of port as a sop to silence.

"What is left to you and me of our Latin and Greek? Flotsam and jetsam. We were respectably proficient in them while at school and college, and I have no doubt that you, like myself, take down your Horace from the shelf every now and then and potter through an ode or two. It warms the cockles of the heart to find that we can still stagger along. When we hear a familiar mythological or classical allusion we prick up our ears, and nothing pleases us more than to drag one in, however trite. The triter it is the greater number recognize it.

“*“Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum!”* We hear the hoof beats of the galloping steed!

“*“Persicos odi, puer, apparatus.”* What a timely commentary on modern social extravagance! How fondly our senses are titillated by any allusion to Falernian wine, Lucrine oysters, or Lalage. Even the dunces respond to the mention of the Trojan horse or the aprochyphal ‘Et tu, Brute.’ Four-fifths glamour, dear Meredith. The classics have ceased to be a fetich to the young unless they are specialists.”

“But what of Shakespeare and Milton? What of the Bible? Are they any more familiar with them? It is your affair, Mason, as a churchman, to deplore the growing lack of familiarity with the Bible as a stimulus to spiritual progress; it is mine, as a lover of literature, to point out that intimate knowledge with that reservoir of English undefiled has ceased to be the equipment of modern youth. Where did our great lawyers of the past seek their most pregnant illustrations? In the Bible and Shakespeare, because sure of striking a responsive chord

in the hearts of their hearers. To-day 'a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver,' would make the jury stare. But at least we have a right to inquire, Mason, what they give us as a substitute. What are these new symbols? This different language? It isn't necessary for you to specify. I know well; I recognize them daily: the conservation of energy, the career of the morning star, the idiosyncrasies of the forest, the analysis of food supplies, the sovereignty of hydraulics. I admit their value—their infallibility if you like—but I dispute their title to be regarded as culture."

Here was a heated discussion already; almost a pretty quarrel. It so happened that we were interrupted at this stage by the entrance of one of my sons-in-law with the early election returns, indicating a political tidal wave, which substituted a new topic. I was not displeased, for I found myself, as the result of the argument, in the quandary of being on the fence and so unlikely, if questioned, to gratify either disputant. I was confident that my two friends were locking horns not merely to renew that oft-ventilated

controversy of the classics against the field. That particular form of heterodoxy, which admits science and the modern languages to the same table with Greek and Latin, has ceased to be regarded as "insurgency" by progressive grandfathers; and it was patent to me from my previous knowledge of my physician and pastor that they were tilting not at college curricula, but at society at large.

Surveying the question from this broader stand-point my sympathies were divided, and I must admit that I felt puzzled. For, after making due allowance for what has been termed the change of symbols, and after discounting Dr. Meredith's arrant prejudice against regarding fundamental inability to forget whether the earth moves round the sun or the contrary is true, as a badge of culture, the modern world—and I, as a grandfather—cannot successfully contend that either the classics, the Bible, Shakespeare, or Milton are the household words among normally educated people (other than ripe scholars and specialists) which they once were.

When we seek the causes a variety suggest

themselves in swift succession. There are so many more books to begin with, and so many more diversions. The time once reserved for familiarizing ourselves with literature is spent in the perusal of the ubiquitous illustrated magazine and the mammoth daily newspaper. Our people are so absorbed in golden industrial enterprises which put a premium on practical knowledge that they take for granted the world's masterpieces, but rarely open them. An increasing fondness for athletic sports—some call it mania—on the part of well-to-do young men and women begets a disposition to devote week-ends and holidays to open-air exercise in lieu of studying the great prose writers or committing poetry to memory. Lastly, democracy, harping on its plea for the brotherhood of man, invites the earnest soul to consider whether settlement work, city sanitation, and the prevention of tuberculosis do not present claims superior to those of what is termed, invidiously, self-culture.

Reflection certainly strengthens one's impression that the old-world evidences of cultivation are moribund. But a patriotic, progressive

grandfather instinctively avoids the conclusion that we have less genuine culture as a consequence, and seeks for convincing substitutes. What are they? As I ask the question I find myself reminded of my friend Dr. Meredith's caustic taunt at social service. At present, as all of us know, the imagination of this country—indeed of the civilized world—is controlled by a glorious wave of humanitarian and civic impulse which tends to dwarf all ideals other than teaching hygiene to the masses and cleansing the Augean stables of municipal incapacity.

Let me hasten to exonerate myself—and Dr. Meredith also—of lack of sympathy with this world movement. He is one of the most stalwart champions in the noble war against tuberculosis. His anathemas concerning the prevalence of dust along our highways as a vehicle for germs have been formidable. Similarly, all the branches of my own family are militants in this social crusade. There is scarcely a female member of either generation who is not lending a hand to the encouragement of tree-planting, the care of alley-ways, the proper methods of wash-

ing babies, the nutritive quality of foods, or some one of the divers other absorbing civic needs which have suddenly become numerous as the heads of the Hydra. It is a source of considerable pride to us that my son David's wife—who is essentially what is termed a modern woman—has shown such marked aptitude in dealing with the milk problem that she has been chosen the president of our local Sanitary League; and it would be unjust to my granddaughter, Dorothy Perkins, not to allude to the active interest she has evinced in the recently established Federation of Girl Scouts.

It will thus be seen that Josephine and I recognize the essential importance and vitality of these united efforts to ameliorate social conditions. But such service can scarcely be regarded as a synonym for culture. Oddly enough, within six months of the meeting of my dinner club, when this subject was broached, my pastor, Rev. Bradley Mason, felt moved to point out in one of his Lenten talks that the beneficent purposes of social service must not be made a substitute for religion. I happen to know that



some of his hearers were disposed to accuse him of jealousy and to insinuate that it was at least debatable whether the world is not at last on the right spiritual track. But I have no desire to renew at this time a dispute—sanctification by faith or works—so venerable that it dates back to the days of poor banished Anne Hutchinson, of whom, I dare say, none of my grandchildren has ever heard. But even though we agree that the basis of future religion may be inspired human sympathy, who will claim that sublime zeal and effective administration in the cause of social science are a satisfying substitute for all the graces of learning? Rather, on the contrary, is one not prompted to inquire how the earnest student of humanitarian progress can hope to avoid the slough of literalism unless his or her vision be aided by search-lights from the stored wisdom and beauty of the past?

If we take up the other substitutes collectively, it is because they seem in large measure co-ordinate. Familiar terms all, and decidedly impressive: Practical knowledge and the apt skill to utilize it, energetic healthy-mindedness, spon-



taneity in revolt against introspection, well-oiled executive ability, noiseless and undeviating as an engine, and, chief of all, that complacent, unadorned god, common-sense. The modern world is proud of them; and the peevish grandfather who complains that they are not symbols of culture is likely to receive the cheerfully unconcerned retort, "What of it?" which is an intimation that they are something better. Very possibly they may be; but this acknowledgment does not leave the indulgent censor without missiles.

"Why is it?" I asked, speaking aloud, so that I might have the benefit of my wife's enlightening comment, "that in civilized society nowadays one so rarely hears any talk which savors of distinction? American men are earnest, moral, high-minded, sensible, shrewd, energetic, and capable. They certainly do not lack ideals or straightforward intelligence. But when they meet around a table for mutual entertainment, unless they become boisterous or tell easy-going stories, they are apt to be eminently dull. Of course, the stereotyped reason given is that every American man sits down at dinner tired."

"The men are dreadful—a disgrace," murmured Josephine. "As regards their fatigue, I mean. They don't try to conceal it; on the contrary, they plume themselves on it to oblige us to entertain them. An American woman never admits she is tired until the doctors tell her she has nervous prostration." It was evident that my theme interested Josephine, for she folded her hands across her knee, which requires more deftness, now that skirts are so narrow.

Thus suitably reminded that my sex is of small social account compared with the other in this country, and that, in thoughtlessly putting the cart before the horse, I had appeared to overlook that, but for the clever adaptability and fluent tongues of our wives and daughters, civilized Europe might still be stigmatizing us as "a nation of shop-keepers," I nevertheless ventured to say:

"We will consider the women presently, dear. I was speaking of the men."

"And you mean that fatigue may be a ruse to conceal how little they know outside their ordinary vocations?"

The bluntness of this was almost unkind, and loyalty to my countrymen bade me respond with dignity. "I was merely investigating, my dear; not formulating. Scarcely a ruse. American men are perfectly natural—too natural, perhaps. But I must admit," I continued, "that when they assemble to partake of excellent food they seem to avoid everything vital in the line of conversation. For the most part, they whisper amiable commonplaces to the equally exhausted men on either side of them. If any subject is broached around the table, as sometimes happens after a glass or two of champagne—the national social invigorator—has made the company feel less tired, it is sure to languish and expire within two or three minutes. Every one seems to be afraid of dwelling on it lest he or some one else be bored. I sometimes think that the educated American man is ashamed to talk earnestly on any subject except his political grievances due to a drop in securities. Or is it that he lacks the requisite equipment?"

"Am I not constantly urging you to encourage general conversation at our dinner parties?"

answered Josephine, the sequence of whose thoughts is not always what the lawyers would term responsive.

"Don't I try?" I asked meekly.

"You sometimes try; but the result is not apt to be exhilarating. I admit though, dear, it isn't usually your fault. General conversation is horribly difficult. Now don't say I'm dragging women in again, for the same must be equally applicable to dinners where there are only men. I know the French do manage it somehow; everybody talks at once, and yet everybody seems to hear the others and give them a chance; and nobody would dream of playing perpetual puss-in-the-corner with the person on his immediate right or left as we all do."

"That is partly race temperament. Though we Americans are said to have some of the mercurial traits of the French, we obviously lack their mental flexibility. But," I exclaimed, "compare ourselves with the educated Englishman of one hundred years ago—the worthies whose table-talk was famous. Undeniably there were bores among them, and some of their con-

versation would sound labored to-day. I grant that they prepared themselves in advance and occasionally edited their good things the morning after; but it was conversation, genuine conversation, not subdued social small talk between two exhausted dinner companions. They were interested in subjects, and they delighted to discuss them with ardor—often for a whole evening. Who does not weary of any subject now after five minutes? World politics, the last religious heresy, the newest philosophy, the important books or plays of the day—how strenuously they battled over them; with what conviction, ardor, and humor they assailed their opponents or supported their own theories. And the point to bear in mind is they were equipped for the fray. Their minds were arsenals of learning, supplying ammunition to the minute-guns of argument and wit with which they raked their adversaries fore and aft. Their opinions meant almost life or death to them, and they had on the tips of their tongues the stored wisdom of the ages, be it Plato or Sophocles, Juvenal or Lucretius, Dante, Pascal, or Don Quixote.”

As I paused in my eloquence, almost breathless, Dr. Meredith's plea of a change of symbols seemed merely a sop to shallowness.

"Of course," said Josephine, who had listened respectfully, appearing to be impressed, "the world has changed very much since then. Even the modern Englishman hasn't time to be so elaborate."

"It is partly a world change, I admit. But the habit of the modern Englishman is still to talk of things which suggest culture. He doesn't read so much as formerly, but, nevertheless, he reads. Our wives keep our library tables piled with books—but how many do we open, except to run through the pictures?"

"There are such quantities printed nowadays that it's impossible to keep up," murmured Josephine. "And that doesn't include reports of committees and pamphlets. The world is more natural than it used to be," she continued, "but it hasn't nearly so much time. Both men and women are so occupied with doing things and recovering from doing things that they haven't leisure for the protracted discussions you spoke

of. If women wish to know specially about a subject, we consult a magazine, engage a timely topic lecturer, or attend a joint debate. But there are plenty of people still who insist on talking—who struggle to keep on when one tries to choke them off. Some, too, who come primed in advance and are terribly boresome; for one can always detect them; they produce no illusion. What strikes me most, Fred," she added meditatively, "is that it is so rarely an æsthetic pleasure now to hear any one converse. One sign of a cultivated society ought to be the ability of a good many to express themselves so charmingly that no one wishes them to stop."

An æsthetic pleasure. Here was indeed a discriminating supplement to my own doubts. Who is not ready to listen indefinitely to the truly charming talker? But how few finished talkers or speakers we meet in private or in public! If we miss to-day the point of view and reserve power which emanate from a background of thorough knowledge, do not our contemporaries, who pride themselves on their conversational powers, lack also, in large measure, the graces of



speech? It may well be that some of our social reticence in private proceeds from the dread of starting on the rampage the guest across the table. The way in which things are said—the voice, the bearing—constitute half of the charm. The mere unadorned desire on the part of a talker to air his words grates on our weary spirits and, as Josephine said, we would fain choke him off. In our revolt from the formalism and studied eloquence of our ancestors, in our effort to be natural and direct, have we not lost much of the distinction which made public and private entertainments memorable?

What more tedious, for instance, than the average “banquet” to which we are so much addicted—the anniversary or special gatherings of educational, professional, and commercial bodies? How seldom we are rewarded. We go, lured by the hope of an occasion which will relieve the routine of our utilitarian lives and appeal to the spirit; we return in dejection, nursing the bitter colloquialism “never again.” To what have we listened? The inspired homilies and florid platitudes of the official dignitary anx-

ious not to offend anybody; the painful articulations of the diffident man of mark struggling to say nothing and sit down; the dismal hortation of the serious speaker devoid of fancy or suppleness; to the complacent teller of anecdotes which bear the hall-mark of the drummer. So much of what is earnest is dreary; so much of what is jocose is commonplace or bourgeois. We possess a redundancy of people ready to rise to their feet and impart information—talk prosily without suspicion or concern as to their want of charm. In their eagerness to educate and preach, they disdain the sensibilities of their hearers. We have a few exceptions, of whom we are justly proud; but what we constantly miss in our public speakers is that felicitous compound of originality, conviction, courage, and scholarship which is best described by the word style. Ours is the era of graceless common-sense, monotonous sermonizing, and the warmed-over humor of the man of the street. Josephine is right; one can almost count on one's fingers the people whom it is an æsthetic pleasure to hear converse or discourse.

Having expressed myself to this effect, but somewhat more colloquially than is here written, I suddenly said, "And now it's your turn. Is the American woman a person of culture?"

My wife frowned as though the inquiry were unwelcome, then answered with a tragic air, "I have realized perfectly all the while that you were leading up to this, and I have been trying to consider. Is the American woman cultivated? Every one knows that the American man as a rule is not. It was scarcely worth while arguing the question. But is she?" Josephine paused a moment absorbed in reflection, then added, but more mournfully than her words seemed to warrant, "We are supposed to be. We have the reputation of being; at least among ourselves."

I felt the occasion to be one when silence on my part would be golden, and that the stern requirements of Josephine's conscience would not permit her to shirk the issue. Yet I could not refrain from egging her on, so to speak, by the basely specious words, "I have been brought up to believe that no foreign woman was to be mentioned in the same breath with her."

“Why not?” she retorted on the instant with the tenseness of protest. Then in a firm but plaintive voice she proceeded as follows: “Do we speak languages? In no city is there more than a sprinkling of American women able to converse fluently with the visiting foreigner. We have to scurry around to find them. What permanent contributions have we made to scholarship? Virtually none. Are we proficient musically? We take lessons from early youth and flock to fashionable concerts to hear prima donnas; but, unlike the English or German girl, unless we are prodigies, we shrink from performing within ear-shot of any one but the family. Are we accomplished housewives? The young American woman of every class has never bothered her head about housekeeping until she had to. Now the educators are trying to bring her to her senses by schools of domestic science. Are we familiar with or adepts at politics? A fastidious few follow the ins and outs of European political parties, but as a sex we have always complained that our own politics are not interesting. The clever Frenchwoman has her country’s affairs at her

tongue's end, and the Englishwoman kisses the babies of the voters at election time. Where, after all, is our great superiority, Fred? In what way do we manifest our culture? Mind," she added imperatively, "I wouldn't say this to any one else in the world."

"I should hope not," I said gravely. "The women's clubs are suspicious enough already that I lack serious purpose; though I have become their genuine admirer since they renounced those stilted essays on literary criticism in favor of civic sanitation."

"Wait a moment, dear. Of course we *are* superior—there's no question about that. But I'm not sure we're cultivated—not yet, that is. The great possession of the American woman—which distinguishes her from every other woman in the world—is her point of view. She thinks for herself, and insists on thinking for herself. This explains her social adaptability. Not only does she feel free to have opinions on every subject without regard to masculine prerogative, but to express them with all the untrammelled brightness at her command;

which makes the women of other nationalities appear tongue-tied in comparison, especially as there is no lack of refinement or modesty in those of us who please the most. We are socially attractive because we choose to use our wits and to be lively companions from the outset rather than worshipped at long range and then appropriated as dolls or drudges. This was an innovation in Vanity Fair which gradually took civilization by storm. The American woman became the fashion—the cynosure of the feminine universe. With what result? Woman has waked up everywhere; we no longer have the field to ourselves, but have competitors. Our independence, our energetic self-reliance, our bright, voluble, spirited ways are being successfully imitated in every quarter of the globe. We are given the credit of discoverers; but, with that granted, when you ask whether we compare favorably in culture with our imitators, a dreadful doubt assails me. We have our point of view; but a point of view must have background and perspective. Sometimes it seems to me, Fred”—and here Josephine weighed her words in token of the enor-

mity of her utterance—"that American women simply chatter. What do you think, dear?"

"I would not venture to express an opinion on such a delicate subject," I answered promptly. "It is enough to have intimated that American men in general society are mum."

In my effort to escape responsibility I must have seemed a craven had Josephine heeded. But she has a way of asking me questions in order to mark time for thought, not expecting an answer, and this was one of the occasions, for she continued as though I had not spoken. "It isn't that we have no Madame de Staël or Madame Récamier. The world of feminine democracy, like that of men, is too busy to put up with elaboration. Yet the American woman at large has lately admitted the social bee to her bonnet and given it priority over the other bees. Thirty years ago the fashionable few who dressed for dinner were looked at askance—almost ostracized by the many. To-day the ambitious woman aspires under the flag of equal opportunity to belong to a social set and be mentioned in the society columns. With increasing wealth



we've developed and are in the throes of a social renaissance, the outward signs of which are receptions, teas, Colonial or Revolutionary orders, leagues, readings, bridge, concerts, committee meetings, and conference lectures, from one of which she feverishly hastens to another. She is so afraid of losing something—that some other woman or family will get ahead of her if she doesn't appear at everything. There's always some new problem confronting her on which she is expected to converse so intelligently that no one will be able to detect that she really hasn't had leisure to consider it at all. The problems are even more numerous than the social functions, and are constantly changing. To hold her own she must appear familiar with everything—the newest books she hasn't read, the latest abstruse theories which she has managed to skim in the current magazine. No wonder, poor thing, she seeks to hide her ignorance behind a metallic brightness born of a smattering and the fear of never catching up." Josephine sighed, evidently from appreciative sympathy. "What I mean is this," she resumed pleadingly.

“Ought not the freedom and propensity to form a definite opinion on every conceivable subject have some stabler balance-wheel than feminine intuition and gregarious tact? Oughtn’t we to store our minds instead of perpetually draining them? Oughtn’t we to attempt fewer things, and do them more persistently? Yes, dear, dreadful as it sounds, I fear that the American woman of to-day is apt to mistake chattering for culture.”

Josephine’s eyes were fixed dreamily on distance, not on me. “We are very quick and very adaptive; ‘lightning-change artists,’” she continued. “We all talk and talk; rather fast and, frequently, all at once. The saving grace is that every now and then, partly as the result of our talking, a commission is appointed, mostly composed of men, and some legislation is started. But that isn’t culture exactly.” She shook her head and was silent for a wistful moment, then turned to me and said, “The subject is—er—a ticklish one, Fred, and painfully perplexing. Don’t let’s discuss it any further.”

Like the dutiful husband I try to be, I prompt-

ly popped back into its box the imp I had unwittingly let loose, and secured the lid. The American woman chatter? Heaven forbid. This would imply an element of shallowness in her make-up deplorable in one whose ambition it is to guide human progress. As an indulgent grandfather I feel confident that the stricture is too harsh and that Josephine would have softened or qualified it on second thought had I ventured to disobey her and prolong the conversation.

And yet there is this to be said in connection with the broader aspect of the theme—the culture of both our women and men—that when one so loyal to her sex as my wife and such an earnest spirit as my friend Dr. Meredith voluntarily utter kindred doubts, even the most lenient of philosophers cannot afford to dismiss lightly the charge that our national civilization tends at present to produce but scantily those graces which are the symbols of genuine erudition and reserve power.

#### IV

YOU must have already gathered from the account given of Mrs. Mabel Flanders Foote's conversion that our neighbor at Ocean-Lea, where we pass our summers, Hugh Armitt Dawson, far from being engrossed by money-getting and spending, is a man of refinement and public-spirited generosity. His benefactions to hospitals and colleges, not always heralded like those of some of his contemporaries, have been numerous and princely, and the ultimate success of several humanitarian projects is directly traceable to his discriminating support in the hour of need. I remember well that Mrs. Foote herself, within the month following that educational luncheon, flourished in my face a check, drawn by him in favor of one of her sociological hobbies, the amount of which made me open my eyes.

He is in the prime of life; an important figure in our industrial development, as some of you

are aware; and a director in many corporations. Every one will concede that, though he inherited from his father a moderate fortune and the nucleus of a business, his present large wealth is the result of his own industry, enterprise, and able interpretation of financial conditions. He is known as a man of scrupulous integrity, incapable of feathering his own nest by means of knowledge derived in a fiduciary capacity.

He has been fortunate, too, on the whole, in his family affairs. His wife, who was of Knickerbocker extraction, and he are devoted helpmates. To be sure, their eldest son, though proficient as a polo player, graduated from a private sanitarium for dipsomaniacs prior to becoming a voluntary exile in Europe, where he oscillates in gentlemanly fashion between Paris and the Riviera for the sake of his health. But another son is associated with him downtown and seems likely to follow in his footsteps and ultimately to become paramount in the management of a business which has crowded or bought out its rivals and desires to be known as a "good trust." Still a third, after marrying the belle of the New

York season, who was also conspicuous for her wealth, has interested himself in the erection of model tenement-houses, and hopes, presently, by proper political influence, to enter diplomatic life as minister to one of the minor courts of Europe. Mr. Dawson was not altogether pleased that his eldest daughter lost her heart and fortune to Lord Humphrey Bale, who has since become the Earl of Batterbrook. He would have preferred an American son-in-law. But the match has turned out reasonably well. There were rumors during the second year, when the bride returned to this country on a visit to her parents, that she would never go back, and people who should know better busily circulated the scandal that a variety actress associated with Lord Humphrey in his salad days had reclaimed him.

The details of the subsequent reconciliation have never been divulged. One can only surmise how it was brought about. It is important to bear in mind that in England mere quiet infidelity on the part of a husband, unless coupled with abusive treatment, is not a valid cause

for divorce, and it has never been suggested that Lord Humphrey beat his wife. I am inclined to think that the timely death of Lord Humphrey's father was the saving factor in a troublesome situation. A woman hesitating on the ragged edge of abandoning her husband for cause might readily find in a countess's tiara the magnet to divert her from the final step. To be Countess Batterbrook, with the right to a seat in Westminster Abbey at royal weddings and funerals, is a perquisite not to be lightly renounced, however hollow as a sentimental consideration.

At all events, the matter was hushed up, and it is generally agreed that the culprit has conducted himself with such decorum or discretion ever since that his wife has recovered some of her good looks, in recognition of which her latest Christmas gift from her father is said to have been in excess of one hundred thousand pounds sterling. It is almost the yearly habit of Mr. and Mrs. Dawson to participate in the gayeties of the London season and pay visits at English country houses before opening their own estab-



lishment at Ocean-Lea for the late summer and autumn. Their agreeable qualities, combined with his inside knowledge of what is going on in Wall Street, have made them social favorites.

It goes without saying that a man so successful has always had implicit faith in the material progress of his native country. But this is far from the limit of his patriotism. If his own opinion be a criterion, no citizen, however democratic and demonstrative, believes more firmly in her political destinies than Hugh Armitt Dawson. He thinks of her as the land of freedom and opportunity, an asylum for the down-trodden of foreign nations (if white), and the great exponent of republican ideals on which the eyes of the civilized world are fixed with envious admiration. While he deprecates the spread-eagle oratory of fire-eating politicians because of its effect on business, and favors arbitration as a panacea, I am confident that in case of actual war no one would be a more loyal and self-sacrificing supporter of the government. I have been told that at the outset he chafed at our retention of the Philippines; but he would not

to-day entrust their protection to any one else; and he has learned to regard a powerful navy as the surest guarantee of peace. If it be said of him that he habitually refrains from slapping other men on the back in token of his democracy, and endeavors to screen his private affairs from the curiosity of the mob more closely than a greedy press approves, his demeanor toward people of every class is simple, direct, and conciliatory, like that of all sensible Americans, though he does not emulate a presidential candidate seeking the horny hand of the locomotive engineer. He is faithful to his political duties, attending caucuses in an emergency, and voting, irrespective of the weather; he used to contribute freely to campaign funds before publicity was required, and he gives freely of his time and money to all movements looking toward the improvement of our institutions and the furtherance of law and order.

I have given this detailed description of his claims to be regarded as a useful citizen of whom we may be proud because I was somewhat taken aback when Luther Hubbard, who is my son

David's brother-in-law, stigmatized him the other day as an inveterate reactionary. This, too, was after Luther had partaken of a propitiatory dinner at the Dawsons' and conversed with him at some length.

I have already indicated that David's wife is a modern woman. As Miss Lavinia Hubbard she entertained even more advanced views on social problems than my second daughter, Winona. Her brother Luther is just as radical—a lank, thin-lipped man whose appearance suggests both a college professor and a factory foreman. Until he begins to speak his effect is rather colorless, and so quiet is his demeanor that what he says seems dry until one suddenly realizes how incisive it is and what startling sentiments he is uttering with that unemotional voice which, like an imperturbable river, sweeps away all obstacles as if they were straws. I am told that on the public platform, where he has begun to figure, he holds his audiences spell-bound by the clearness with which he marshals his statistics and anticipates the arguments of those with whom he disagrees.

“Inveterate reactionary?” I queried. “I had assumed that, as men of his class go, Hugh Armitt Dawson’s sympathies were decidedly progressive. He is an authority, you know, on profit-sharing, and has put into practice in his own enterprises the doctrines which he advocates. Think of the money he gives to promote all sorts of social reforms. His manners, too, betray not a trace of condescension. It surprises me that you do not regard him as a rather fine type of American democracy.”

Luther smiled as if amused, though I know he tolerates my opinions and has more than once intimated that, were I twenty years younger, we should agree on everything. “Oh, yes, I grant all that. Highly commendable and not to be discredited. But I dispute your use of the word ‘democracy.’ Mr. Dawson’s idol is property, and modern democracy is ready, if needs be, to subordinate property to human welfare. That society should venture to limit the prerogatives of complete ownership—prescribe how much one may accumulate, bequeath, or inherit—will never be otherwise than repugnant

to him. He looks on all such measures as a species of piratical confiscation at the behest of the many against the fortunate few, and his opulent benefactions—spontaneous and commendable as they are—are, in part, a protest to show how much better equipped he is to dispose of his superfluous wealth than the State to do it for him. There's the case against him in a nutshell. Every fresh interference with what he was brought up to term the vested rights of ownership still produces the same effect on him as a red rag on a bull, with the result that he is blind to the fact that democracy left that flag-post in the rear half a generation ago."

Luther had certainly revealed with pitiless acumen the weak joints in the armor of my summer neighbor's civic righteousness. I recognized the essential justness of the criticism. Many times have I heard Mr. Dawson fulminate irately on this identical theme and lose all sense of proportion in the process. At the same time Luther Hubbard is apt to be so serenely sure of his conclusions that I instinctively seek grounds of dissent. I admire his earnestness; but in spite of

his tranquil tones he has the air at times of preaching a gospel in the name of the American people, which is trying to those who remember that he failed in business at the outset of his career, has occupied a subordinate position downtown ever since, and is suspected of wearing, at times, celluloid collars as a badge of immunity from aristocratic contagion.

Do not misunderstand me. For all I know, his lack of commercial success may properly be regarded as another nail in the coffin of commercial competition. I have reason to believe that he performs his routine duties with scrupulous fidelity, and that his remaining energies are devoted without hope of pecuniary reward to the advancement of those social reforms on which he speaks so authoritatively. He is an eager student of current legislation, and no session passes without his frequent appearance before committees in behalf of bills to ameliorate existing conditions. If he is frugal in his wardrobe, he is always neat. I merely mean that if everybody were exactly like him we should be a rather dingy lot, however earnest and estimable.

Remember, too, that my sympathies with democracy are far from lukewarm. You may recall that Josephine has already admitted that, though I cherished doubts regarding airships, I have always lent a willing ear to those eager to promote the eventual brotherhood of man. It would have appeared to me trite to invite Luther Hubbard to change places in his mind's eye with Hugh Armitt Dawson. The inevitable reply would be, "Very likely I should look at the matter exactly as he does; but I should be wrong." The propensity to nurse the prejudices of one's own class is illuminating as a key to human nature, but not to human progress.

Luther's indictment was certainly well taken up to a certain point. There is no doubt that Mr. Dawson and many like him of equal prominence in the world of pecuniary affairs are in the predicament of one who busies himself with trying to set back the hands of the clock after the hour has struck. It is characteristic of them and their fashionable followers that they so rarely anticipate what is going on beneath the surface of society until it has been transmuted



into concrete law. They waken at the last minute with no resource but to calumniate the masses, who, as they claim, have nothing to lose. Within a year I have heard a fastidiously foolish American woman remark that the gift to every man of the right to vote was a fatal mistake, as if she cherished the hope that the privilege would some day be withdrawn. Similarly, any observant grandfather hears to-day in august circles on every side the horrified ejaculations of those who have suddenly discovered, through the death of relatives who have left them a windfall, that they must hand over a slice to the State for the privilege of entering into possession of somebody else's money. Tax the property which my uncle accumulated by his sagacity and bequeathed me of his own free will? Cut off twice as big a slice because he was shrewd enough to amass five hundred thousand instead of one? Compel me to pay at a higher rate than his son would have had to pay because I was so fortunate as to outlive his son? Require under the laws of conservative New York (as they stood until modified by the Legislature

of 1911, in deference to fears of a general exodus) the wretch who comes unexpectedly by will into a million, but happens, poor man, to be only a distant relative of the testator, to hand over one-quarter—twenty-five per cent—to the State?

The muffled cries of the wounded are heard through the land. I recall that even so sensible a woman as Josephine expressed horror when she was told a dozen years ago that it was constitutional for the State treasurer to confiscate by way of tax a sum equal to a year's income on the pittance (thirty thousand dollars) left her by her great-aunt, Rebecca, who was so eccentric that it was feared she would devise everything to foreign missions. Some of our very best citizens have found and still find difficulty in accommodating their sense of justice to the principle not merely promulgated, but accepted by the legislators and courts of law of every civilized nation, that the right to bequeath and the right to inherit are not, as a previous generation imagined, sacred white elephants on which no one may lay a finger. Put limits to the amount which an able financier may accu-

mulate? Curtail his inalienable right to do what he will with his own? One would suppose from the gloomy way in which they wag their heads and murmur about confiscation that it was radicalism incarnate. Yet, as every one not an economic ignoramus is aware, legacy taxes and death duties are almost as old as the hills—dating back, certainly, to Rome and the Emperor Augustus in the year A. D. 6, who borrowed them from the Egyptians. We have imposed a tax on inheritances from time to time in the past to meet the requirements of war or financial stringency. The novelty is in the progressive feature—the social claim that it is equitable to cut off a larger slice for the needs of the State from the man who inherits much than from him who inherits little, and in such increasing ratio that at a certain point in the ascending scale the tax collector's knife will cut sheer to the bone and take collops of flesh instead of thin strips—especially in cases where the beneficiary had no reason to expect anything whatever.

In this more modern feature our legislators

have been imitators, not pioneers. We have trailed behind, or certainly not anticipated, as those afflicted would have us believe, the other nations of Europe. The English Finance Act of 1894, the French highly progressive legacy tax laws of 1901 and 1902, and the German National Act of 1906 were already on the statute books when the phrase "swollen fortunes" added a new form of nightmare to the slumbers of the multi-millionaire. From the point of view of what has been done already, the foreign nations have nothing to learn from us in this respect. Indeed, when one now a grandfather takes account of that new group of social-humanitarian measures which have been brewing for the last twenty years, and have suddenly become household words to every political aspirant—legacy taxes, workingmen's compensation acts, old-age pensions, industrial insurance and the like—the Fourth of July claim that this country leads the world in radical accomplishment is certainly not borne out by any comparison with legislation across the water.

How suggestive is that forbidding phrase

“swollen fortunes”! It conjures up a dropsical condition ready to be pricked and which alienates sympathy. If it be said that we were not pioneers in adopting the progressive inheritance tax, no advocate of the principle can complain that we have not, under the spur of that blood-thirsty figure of speech, shown ourselves quick-witted imitators. It is essentially true of this nation that when its imagination is fired it takes suggestion as a cat laps milk. The economic query—“Why shouldn’t the community tax the lucky inheritor of a million more than him who receives only a paltry twenty thousand dollars?”—was put in the nick of time to dazzle with rainbow hopes the treasurers of forty-seven States already at their wits’ ends to provide fresh funds for the public improvements—parks, hospitals, recreation grounds, model school and court houses—demanded by the sovereign people. It served to transform them from rather meek officials into eager butchers, and, as a consequence, I should not wonder if that inveterate reactionary, Hugh Armitt Dawson, is apt to awaken in distress under the im-

pression that he is the dead carcass of a huge sperm-whale, surrounded by a flotilla of small boats, the ruthless crews of which brandish long knives.

Of all the reforms which as a grandfather I have lived to see instituted, none strikes me as more sane and meritorious than the progressive inheritance tax. It does not surprise me in the least that those directing our political destiny should argue that society can trust more safely to the automatic action of a law, which sequesters for the use of the State a liberal slice of every multi-millionaire's accumulations, than to the spontaneous generosity of the financially plethoric individual. For every half-dozen noble philanthropists who would, by public donations, prove their sense of responsibility to the society which made such wealth possible, there would be a hundred who would hive and hand it over undiminished to their heirs. In spite of the libraries, hospitals, and endowed institutions of learning, which attest the scruples of a few with large possessions, the State would be sadly out of pocket were it to trust solely to

the so-called vested right of testamentary initiative.

Yet at the same time I cannot help feeling considerable sympathy—and not altogether sneaking sympathy—for my wealthy neighbor, Mr. Dawson, and rather haunted by the analogy which I have drawn between him and a deceased leviathan. Were he to die to-morrow, he would lie literally between the devil and the deep blue sea. The news by telegraph of the death of so big a fish would be the signal for every tax collector to whip out his knife in the hope of being able to secure some portion of the spoil. Conditions change so rapidly in this country that what is strange doctrine one year becomes the political shibboleth of the next; and it may fairly be said that the spread of the progressive feature of the inheritance law has begun to resemble wild fire. Startling at first to the conservative instincts of legislators, it opens vistas of opportunity which broaden the more it is applied. As a producer of revenue the process is so simple, and the needs of our democracy inspired by large plans for social



reform are so great, it is not surprising that those charged with the farming of the new plunder have lost their heads a little under the impulse of a phrase which seems to sanctify blood-letting.

I dare say that Luther Hubbard is right in his belief that Hugh Armitt Dawson still resents, as a long step toward anarchy, the legislation which will tax after death his ten millions (more or less) at a much higher rate than the bare competency left by his neighbors; but I feel confident that he would presently resign himself to his plight, and perhaps even recognize the essential justness of the discrimination against him, if he could look forward to a single deft operation instead of a series of protracted proddings. Every man's hand is against him, and he finds himself in much the same category with the gypsy moth and other noxious enemies of society. If his executors could only pay up at once and be done with it, he could afford to smile. But this consolation is denied him. They will have to reckon not only with a single set of authorities, but with those of every sovereign State where there is an inheri-

tance tax law, the officials of which can succeed in planting a harpoon in his body. It may truly be said that the lure of booty has transformed the State treasurers of the Union into a company of free lances.

Were Hugh Armitt Dawson to die to-morrow, those charged with the settlement of his affairs would be liable to pay under existing laws, (1) an inheritance tax to the sovereign State of which he was an inhabitant on land within the State and on all his personal property wherever it happened to be; (2) a further tax to the several sovereign States within whose bounds any of his property was at his death; (3) a further tax to the sovereign State under the law of which any corporation, the shares of which were standing in his name at his death, was organized; for otherwise the accredited agent of the corporation would refuse to transfer them; and, as a condition precedent to the transfer, might require the filing of an inventory to facilitate the discovery of something else to pounce on; (4) a further tax (if the executors could be "bluffed") to the sovereign State

where certain corporations in which he held shares owned property though organized elsewhere.

With this complicated prospect of being cut into slices, or collops, staring him in the face, is there any great wonder that my wealthy neighbor is disposed to remain an inveterate reactionary? Nor is this the limit. Over his head hangs, like the sword of Damocles, the impending thread of another slice cut off by a national inheritance tax—a measure constantly predicted. If to these levies after death be added liberal taxes on real estate and an income tax, both State and national, while he is living, one does not need to be a progressive arithmetician to wonder how long, at this rate, fortunes will remain “swollen.”

Luther Hubbard would declare, I have no doubt, that he does not countenance this orgy. He would assure you that the present rapacity is a natural consequence of the simultaneous working of new laws in twenty or thirty States all aglow with the spirit of human brotherhood, and eager to gather in all they can. He would

assure you that comity will presently remedy the defects of the situation, and that two or three of the sovereign States have already passed laws remitting a tax on the property of any non-resident where there is reciprocal legislation in favor of the inhabitants of the State granting the exemption. But the momentary answer to this is that the reciprocity has thus far hung fire. For the time being at least the sovereign States have been too intoxicated by the "high jinks" incident to cutting up successive whales to consider relinquishing any portion of the oil on any such old-fashioned plea as abstract justice. Perhaps they will come to it presently; we generally do work round in the long run in this country to a living basis of fairness. But this new source of revenue has so strong a grasp on the imagination of those who believe in the supremacy of States' rights that, in the interval, Hugh Armitt Dawson may depart this life and find himself after death the hacked leviathan which his fancy depicts. This is why my sympathies go out to him when I hear him invidiously referred to as an inveterate reactionary.

There is one other point in this connection which should be touched on. In spite of being a progressive grandfather I approach it gingerly; yet it has a certain fascination, if only because it is so foreign to the ideals or fears, as the case may be, of the older generation. At what figure will those bent on the brotherhood of man draw the line? What sum will the lucky dog of the future be allowed to inherit without incurring the reproach of possessing a swollen fortune? Will our social law-makers agree with Josephine that no one with less than five million dollars is really rich, or insist that the maximum expenditure for any one should be the income derivable from five hundred thousand? "Any one with this has all that is good for him," I can almost hear Luther Hubbard say; yet, as a matter of fact, he has never committed himself in set terms. Though the subject is at the back of his mind and is one of which he now and then affords me a glimpse by way of showing what earnest souls, not inveterate reactionaries, are meditating, he balks, so to speak, when I try to pin him down, and tells me that this is one of

the reforms of the future which has not yet been thoroughly worked out.

That boggy, complete confiscation, which—like the hysterical plaint of the Southerner concerning the social status of the negro, “Do you wish him to marry your daughter?”—wears too much the semblance of a Jack-o’-lantern to be convincing, has no real terrors for a progressive grandfather. Our highest courts may be trusted to declare for many years to come that it would be unreasonable to deprive any man of the means of sending his children to private schools and owning a box at the opera. But when it comes to lopping off the superfluities by the automatic operation of a guillotine-like inheritance tax law, there is a certain fascination, as I have indicated, in forecasting the mandate of some Robespierre of excise—“Everything over and above one hundred thousand to the State, and be thankful you are allowed that.”

“How would that strike you?” I inquired of my wife by way of staring the future in the face.

Josephine looked grave. It was obviously a novel proposition to her and a little of a shock.

“To the State? All over one hundred thou-

sand? One could manage on that if one were careful."

I hastened to reassure her by saying, "I am referring to the future, dear. It could hardly happen in our time."

Josephine meditated a moment. "What would the State do with the surplus?"

"Provide grand opera and round-the-world trips for everybody, coming-out balls for workmen's daughters, municipal airships, automobiles, and tiaras, and, in short, enable the multitude to enjoy the perquisites of life now reserved for the few."

Josephine looked at me a little reproachfully, though she recognized my banter as that of one at his wits' end for a reply. Sighing gently she said:

"If, Fred, the world could wipe out all its direst poverty and misery in exchange for half its beauty and elegance, could it not almost afford the exchange? And it would be only for a while. I believe that in the end the world would be more beautiful."

Coming from my wife's lips this radiant prophecy was wellnigh convincing, and I have



no question that Luther Hubbard's distrust of inveterate reactionaries springs from a kindred humanitarian hope. At the same time, is it not too much to expect that a grandfather, who has been taught to reverence as one of the bulwarks of the ages the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution concerning "life, liberty, or property," should adopt at one fell swoop the ultra limits of this doctrine of the future without consulting the political economists?

"A limit to the amount which any one may inherit is one of the grand hopes of the future," I heard a contemporary remark some years ago with such evident conviction that I was moved to inquire—knowing that he had an only son who would look to him for patrimony—at what figure he would fix the prohibition.

My friend reflected a moment, and then replied steadfastly: "At just a little beyond what I shall leave."

His face was so thoroughly sober as he spoke that I have never felt sure that he was not an unconscious humorist.

## V

TWO recent events, commonplace in themselves yet typical, have served notice on me through the discussion to which they have given rise in my family circle, that the progress of social reforms resembles the silent movement of the glaciers, and that we suddenly find ourselves condemning as monstrous results which we complacently accepted as inevitable less than a generation ago.

Every one who lives in my neighborhood knows Thomas McGillicuddy by sight, for thirty years the chore man of our block; a brisk little man with a clump of chin whiskers and a pronounced brogue. He moves more slowly than formerly, and but for the indulgence of the households for whom he works might fairly be regarded as superannuated. He has brought up a large family, six daughters and an only son, John, the apple of his eye, a strapping,

able-bodied railroad employee, who has a wife and three small children.

Two months ago, just prior to Thanksgiving Day, this son lost his right leg by an accident due to the negligence of another subordinate, a fellow-servant, as the legal phrase goes. Cut off just above the knee. But for his strong constitution and temperate habits, according to the surgeon who performed the operation, he would never have pulled through. But he will get well, for which his family is becomingly thankful, despite the plight in which they find themselves.

The question naturally suggests itself, What will become of them? How are they going to get along? Everybody has been very kind and sympathetic. The immediate needs of the wife and children were provided for by the purse which one of the charitably inclined young women in our block raised by personal solicitation while the accident was fresh in the public mind. They will not need to draw on their scanty savings for the moment. The victim, who is still at the hospital, puts a bold front on the situation and keeps up his courage by the

perusal of communications from both owners and makers of wooden legs which reach him through the mail. All of these are to the effect that one hobbles through life surprisingly well after a little practice. Josephine has sent fruit and other delicacies to the sufferer and new toys to the children—which is but typical of the general sympathy among those who take a personal interest.

But we all know—and the victim best of all—that the hard time is coming later, when the philanthropic “tumult dies,” the charitable “kings depart,” and he is left minus a leg to confront a workaday, industrial world. Even the most philanthropic of us demand variety for our emotions and tend to lose sight of an irreparable catastrophe after we have done everything in our power to provide relief. It is inevitable that something else will happen presently to divert our warm commiseration into a fresh channel, and John McGillicuddy’s accident will become an old story. Hence it behooves us to dwell on the inquiry, How are they going to get along? before our sensibilities have

been rocked to sleep by the soothing refrain: "Every one has done more than the unfortunates had a right to expect, and now they must manage the best they can."

The driving exigencies of modern life take for granted the frequent lopping off of legs and arms. But it is scarcely necessary to demonstrate that ours is a highly merciful and considerate age. Even the joy rider is more than apt to turn back and convey to the hospital at break-neck speed the mangled form of whom-ever his car has crushed. When accidents occur, who is more prompt in providing immediate succor than the modern corporation, which used to be accused of lacking a soul? Far from being left to shift for himself, the injured employee without resources is tenderly lifted into an ambulance, tucked up in a snowy cot, and made nearly as good as new without charge by the wonderful resources of antiseptic surgery. So humane is the treatment accorded the patient that minor accidents become almost a privilege in that he was never so well taken care of in his life. Loss of pay for a limited period

is often precluded, and almost any self-respecting workman may break a rib or two without much concern as to the consequences.

But this beneficent alliance between corporate charity and surgery must needs be conscious of limitations when in the presence of certain injuries. A leg is a leg; a right arm is a right arm. A glass eye is merely an æsthetic mockery. The man who is smashed all to pieces, coaxed back to life, and sent out maimed and halt may be temporarily grateful to his nurse and doctor and to the merciful corporation which footed the bills; but is scarcely to be blamed if, in the watches of the night, before he is pronounced cured, he keeps asking himself, "what is to become of us?" and lets his thoughts dwell on the lawyers' cards concealed under his pillow rather than on the communications which set forth the merits of artificial limbs.

About a week after the accident to John McGillicuddy, when indeed his recovery was still doubtful, my wife asked me to hint to his father, our chore man, that if there was need of a lawyer

to safeguard the victim's rights, that rising young attorney, my grandson, Harold Bruce, was the logical candidate for the position.

I use the word "candidate" advisedly, for Josephine's plea was as follows: "Of course, I am wholly unfamiliar with legal affairs, but Harold tells me that a very large percentage of law business nowadays consists of personal injury suits and that it is the habit of the less scrupulous lawyers to employ, either openly or on the sly, 'runners,' as he calls them, who keep track of all accidents reported in the newspapers and lose no time in trying to obtain leave from the injured persons to represent them in court. Harold hasn't a doubt that John has been deluged with lawyers' cards since he entered the hospital, and John, may, of course, have engaged some one already. But probably not, for he is still very low. Harold's firm does not stoop to such methods, which, he informs me, tend to promote litigation and to secure a mean advantage over the rest of the profession. At the same time, if there is to be a suit, and some one's services are requisite—or even if poor John dies,



it seems—Harold would like to obtain the employment for his firm. It would be a feather in his cap and the case would be splendidly handled, for it appears that his Mr. Fogarty is what Harold terms a spellbinder before a jury. So, other things being equal, I should suppose the McGillicuddies would be glad to give the dear boy the chance. It might be the making of him, he tells me.”

Let me remark parenthetically at this point that my grandson, though admitted to the bar, is an assistant in the offices of Blackstone, Kent, Fogarty, and Einstein, one of our leading firms, which, as the names of the partners indicate, is equipped for every modern legal emergency.

“The point which I do not understand, dear,” continued Josephine after the delivery of her message, “and which I meant to ascertain from Harold, but hadn’t the heart to inquire, is why any lawyer’s services are necessary. The accident was so dreadful and so completely due to the other man’s carelessness that the railroad cannot fail to treat John handsomely.”

“What do you mean by handsomely?” I

inquired, and I suspect that my smile betrayed a suggestion of irony.

My wife looked momentarily disconcerted by this shifting to her shoulders of the burden of argument; but after a moment's reflection she succeeded by means of the following dispassionate statement in letting it slip gracefully to the ground for me to pick up:

"He is crippled for life and will never be able to work on the railroad again. His earning capacity is gone, or, at least, is so slight that his wife will be compelled to scrub floors or sew her eyes out and the children to labor at an early age in order to make two ends meet. As a consequence, the entire family will fall several pegs lower in the social scale, if not become a public charge—unless something suitable is done."

"One of the dire penalties of being a fellow-servant," I responded.

Josephine seemed for the moment nonplussed, then her eyes flashed. "I keep telling you, Fred, that it was the other man's fault entirely. John wasn't in the least to blame."

"Every one admits that. But he ought to have known better."

"Better than what?"

"Better than assume the risks of the employment."

"Assume the risks? I don't understand you."

"The risk of being hurt by some other subordinate's negligence."

"I don't believe John ever did."

"I am positive he did not," I answered.

"Then what *do* you mean, Fred?" My wife can look rather severe when she believes that she is being trifled with on what she deems a serious subject.

"The law insists he did."

"Our law? Insists when it knows he didn't? Then the law——"

"Quite so," I interrupted before she could frame animadversions which she might subsequently regret concerning the bulwark of our institutions. "Unfortunately, one cannot dispose of the law in so summary a fashion, Josephine." Then to complete her growing bewilderment I added, "Moreover it was John's duty to know that the other man was likely to be careless."

"How could he?" she cried triumphantly.

"Thomas told me that John didn't know the other man, even by sight."

"That makes no difference. The law says he had a better opportunity than the railroad to keep an eye on him and realize that he might commit blunders. If you don't believe me, dear, consult your grandson fresh from his law studies."

Josephine gasped. "You mean that the railroad won't give him anything?"

"Pay his doctor's bills."

"And nothing else?"

"Not unless Harold's firm compels them to by convincing a judge and jury either that John wasn't a fellow-servant after all, or that even if he were, the railroad itself was negligent in some way and that John wasn't. To convince them—if he does convince them—will take three years at least, require elaborate preparation and an agonizing trial. Eye-witnesses of the catastrophe will be summoned by either side and badgered into admitting that what they stated five minutes before was the reverse of what they meant to say. Physicians will be put upon the

rack and demonstrated to be ignoramuses by experts hired for the purpose. The judge will probably feel obliged to rule that John can't recover. If he is reversed on appeal the agony must be gone through again. Assuming that the case gets to a jury, the amount awarded will depend on the ability of Mr. Fogarty to awaken their sympathies, on whether they like the looks of John (who may be a Mason), on how near it is to the dinner-hour, and on various other unscientific considerations. If they return a large verdict, the fees of the experts and witnesses must come out of it, a considerable slice for Mr. Fogarty, and something for Harold. You see, the whole affair is a sort of grand lottery, and the likelihood is that the strain on John and his wife of the delay and uncertainty will be such as to produce nervous prostration for one or both, which will eat up most of what is recovered."

I paused for breath, not because I had exhausted the possibilities of the subject. Whereupon Josephine seized the opportunity to exclaim with feeling.

“What a barbarous and unphilanthropic state of affairs.”

My previous comment that we suddenly condemn as monstrous results which we once accepted with complacency was due to this exclamation of my wife's. Josephine, as she has admitted, does not pretend to a knowledge of the law, but I am confident that had some one forty years ago (she is always young to me) poured in her sympathetic ear the details of poor John's calamity, her tender heart would have bled, but it would not have occurred to her that “something suitable” ought to be done for him by his employer. She would have deplored his loss of a leg, which deprived him of a livelihood, as one of those dire misfortunes for which Providence has made no provision, like falling off the roof of a house, for instance, while at work—lamentable and to be mitigated by charity, but not in the nature of an injustice which society was called on to redress.

We need to go back only another forty years to find no less a person than James Scarlett, Lord Abinger, solemnly announcing from the

bench that it would never do to permit a butcher's assistant to recover damages from his master for injuries caused through the overloading by another servant of the market wagon on which they were both perched. The picture which he drew on that occasion of the domestic consequences which would flow from a contrary decision were so convincing that they have proved a stumbling-block in the pathway of humanitarian progress ever since.

"The master" (this is his lordship's language), "for example, would be liable to the servant for the negligence of the chambermaid for putting him into a damp bed; for that of the upholsterer for sending in a crazy bedstead, whereby he was made to fall down while asleep and injure himself; for the negligence of the cook in not properly cleaning the copper vessels used in the kitchen; of the butcher in supplying the family with meat of a quality injurious to the health; of the builder for a defect in the foundation of the house, whereby it fell and injured both the master and the servant by the ruins."



Sagacious words these from the stand-point of the period. So sagacious, indeed, that they served to solve the acknowledged doubts of one of our own wisest tribunals when five years later, in 1842, the liability of a railroad for injuries to an engineer, due to the carelessness of a switchman, a fellow-servant, was argued before it. When Chief-Justice Shaw, who rendered the opinion in that famous case, *Farwell v. Boston & Worcester Railroad Corporation*, decided that the employee could afford to bear the burden of the accident better than the poor railroad, he little realized what a giant the pigmy industry which implored his protection would shortly become, and what a fetish the stone wall erected by him on the foundation laid by Lord Abinger, in *Priestley v. Fowler*, would prove even to-day. Nor was this the first precedent on this side of the water for the doctrine that the workman assumes as a risk of his employment all injuries due to a fellow-servant's negligence. Chief-Justice Shaw cited with approval the decision made the previous year by a majority of the Court of Appeals of South Carolina, that a fireman who,

like John McGillicuddy, had lost a leg through the carelessness of his engine-driver was left without a remedy against the corporation. If all employers of labor were to be held responsible to those in their service for injuries not due to the negligence of the employer, who might not be rendered bankrupt by a servant's blunder?

All this I straightway pointed out to Josephine by way of enlightenment, lest her outraged sympathies should lead her to commit some fresh contempt of court before I could make plain to her that had she been alive when this hardy perennial fiction of an implied contract on the part of the wage-earner originated, she would unquestionably have accepted it like the rest of the educated world as the quintessence of human sagacity. And sagacity it might still appear but for two new factors in human affairs. As a grandfather, I am in doubt which has been the more remarkable during the last half century: the development of mighty industrial mechanisms, twin products of steam and electricity, with all their train of dangerous occupations destructive to life and limb, or the

growth of the sentiment, child of the brotherhood of man, that it is cruel to fasten the entire burden of a shattered life on the luckless being mangled or maimed in the course of industrial employment.

Oh, the poor railroad! Yet even as we wagged our heads in approbation of this formula, the infant revolutionizer of traffic had attained the dimensions of an octopus, and we found ourselves listening to a siren plea, evolved from the heart rather than the brain, and before which the sound lawyer stands confounded, if not aghast, even to-day—that the cost of maintaining those grievously crippled in all hazardous callings pursued for the world's benefit should be charged to production. In other words, that the miner delving underground, the railroad employee, the factory operative, cheek by jowl with swiftly moving machinery, and the workman who daily inhales poisonous gases can no longer, without injustice, be thrown adrift on the world when incapacitated for further labor by the perils to which they are exposed; but that the business itself should, in

some measure at least, provide an indemnity fund for the relief of the victims.

I could see Josephine's eyes brighten with approval as I enlarged on this doctrine, pointing out that though primarily a humanitarian world-wave, it was also a common-sense compact between ethics and political economy at the expense of the mere shell of law. The phrases which I used—Employers' Liability Acts, Workingmen's Compensation Laws—were evidently so familiar to her—though I knew that she had only the haziest knowledge concerning them—as to cause her to appropriate them joyfully as a panacea for her distress, exclaiming:

"Of course, that's the solution, Fred. And doesn't it take care of poor John? Why," she added, "do you smile? What is it I don't understand?"

"Don't you consider the United States the most progressive and enlightened nation on the globe? The guide and the moving spirit in the world's attitude toward suffering humanity?"

She balked at the trap, though temperament-

ally patriotic. "I suppose so. Every now and then, however, I discover something about us that I didn't know before. I always took for granted that we invented progressive legacy taxes to reduce swollen fortunes until you informed me that they were known to the Egyptians. If I live a little longer, I expect to see everything under the sun traced to Rameses II. Yes, I have been accustomed to think that in humanitarianism at least we are a guide to the rest of the world."

"Then it may be something of a shock to you, dear, to be told that almost every civilized nation, excepting ourselves, has a Workingmen's Compensation Act in force to provide for just such cases as John McGillicuddy's. Germany led the way in 1884, over twenty-five years ago, followed by Austria in 1889. Autocratic governments, but they set the example! There is scarcely a European country, big or little, or a Colonial Dependency which has not joined the procession; Great Britain in 1897, France, in 1898, Italy in the same year, even despotic Russia in 1903. And the list includes communities

dissimilar as Finland, Luxemburg, Hungary, New South Wales, British Columbia, and the Cape of Good Hope. Legislation, which among most of the other nations is beginning to be regarded as ancient history, is in our native land hanging by the gills in the cold storage warehouse of our various State Capitals—buried in committee, referred to special commissions, wrangled over, postponed, and huddled out of sight.”

“How infamous!” interposed Josephine, by way of not seeming to lack ardor in a cause where she felt sure she was right, but concerning the concrete merits of which she was conscious of profound ignorance.

“In Great Britain,” I continued, “the employer is directly responsible to the workman and protects himself by voluntary insurance; in Germany the employer is not liable to the workman, but solely to mutual associations of employers in kindred trades, supervised by State officials, for the premiums assessed against him to cover the indemnities paid to the injured. The underlying principle in each case is the sub-

stitution of definite and compulsory compensation for uncertain liability enforced by speculative litigation. In most countries sickness insurance societies, supported partly by the employees and partly by the employers, provide for temporary disabilities; but prolonged or permanent incapacity for work is relieved by a sliding scale of direct money payments, for a fixed period or for life, charged, regardless of any but wilful negligence, to the cost of production. In some jurisdictions the act applies to all industrial accidents, in others it is limited to certain hazardous occupations; but in every instance it covers a wide range of employment and contemplates adequate relief to all grievously disabled in the industrial world without reference to care or the lack of it."

"And why have we done nothing?" inquired Josephine with the reluctant sternness of a patriot dismayed by grim statistics.

"It wouldn't be exact to say we have done nothing; but until recently we have not accomplished a great deal. We have a rather feeble Federal Act, good as far as it goes, applicable to



artisans and laborers employed by the United States in arsenals and navy-yards and in river and harbor fortification, under which compensation for disabling and fatal injuries is fixed at one year's earnings. But subsequent amendments, designed to extend the benefits of this law to all civilian employees of the Federal Government receiving less than three thousand dollars, and to raise the limit of compensation to seven years' wages, not exceeding seven thousand five hundred dollars in the aggregate, were defeated. The Sixty-first Congress, however, sanctioned the appointment of a Commission to investigate the entire subject, and report not later than December, 1911. The several sovereign States on their part have been individually coquetting with the dilemma—often with considerable ardor—for a number of years. In a few States the 'fellow-servant' dogma has been abrogated by statute; or prohibited as a defence in the case of railroads; and every lawyer knows that our Courts, stirred by pity, have strained their legal consciences in trying to whittle the obnoxious dogma by ingenious distinctions as to

the limits of 'fellow-service.' In other States the fetish of 'assumed risks' has been tempered and the doctrine of 'contributory negligence' modified. With the general result, however, that legal liability as opposed to fixed compensation still remains the predominant theory of relief. The enactment, in 1909, in five different States, of Compensation Acts of varying scope, modelled substantially on that of Great Britain (supplemented by no less than half a dozen during the year ending December 31, 1911), seemed, I admit, to afford workmen who pursue dangerous callings, and the community overburdened by litigation caused by personal injuries, a glimpse of the promised land. But only for a brief moment. A stone wall has arisen in a single night, the work of exalted human intelligence grieved and contrite, but helpless. The New York Court of Appeals has lately declared that an act of the legislature, imposing compulsory compensation on the employers of workmen in certain callings exceptionally hazardous to life and limb, contravenes the provisions of the State and Federal Constitutions in purport-

ing to authorize the taking of property without due process of law."

As I spoke by the card, my conclusion may have sounded bewilderingly solemn. At least Josephine shook her head with the air of one perplexed and said, "You will have to explain what that means"—a remark which she qualified by adding, "Men seem to have a convenient way of disposing of a thing they are opposed to by calling it unconstitutional."

"In this case, my dear," I hastened to assent, disregarding her generalization, "the judges said they were very sorry, admitted that it was a pity—almost apologized for running counter to the humanitarian movement of the age. But they explained that all economic, philosophical, and moral theories, however attractive and desirable, must play second fiddle to the Constitution, which prescribes that no man's property may be taken away without his leave except by due process of law. Some countries—England for instance—have no written constitutions. There the law-making body, Parliament, is supreme."

"How inconvenient! Couldn't we get rid of ours somehow?" murmured my wife. "Just think of the number of people without an appendix."

I realized that Josephine did not intend to be flippant. She was merely expressing aloud the not unnatural thought which had popped into her mind that if surgery could demonstrate that certain organs were superfluous, a similar experiment might be tried on the body politic. But I answered gravely:

"That would be out of the question. We might alter it, however. But an amendment to this particular clause of the Constitution would be no easy matter. We should have Hugh Armitt Dawson and most of our other friends pointing out that if property may be taken away on one excuse, why not another? To tell the truth, my dear," I added mournfully, "compulsory compensation appears to have struck a temporary snag. It remains to be seen whether the higher courts of other States will adopt the New York view regarding constitutionality. The first-fruits of the decision has been the pas-

sage, in 1911, by the legislatures of New Jersey, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin, of Compensation Acts shorn through caution of the compulsory feature and thus optional to both parties, on the theory that half a loaf is better than no bread. This emasculation has been minimized, so far as possible, by the abolition at the same time of the hoary defences of fellow service, negligence, and assumption of risks in suits brought against employers who refuse to subscribe to the new provisions. I say temporary snag because I haven't a doubt that a people so resourceful as ours, and so prompt in redressing humanitarian wrongs after they have taken the trouble to comprehend them, will discover some method of evading this apparent bar to the validity of a reform which the rest of the civilized world adopted a quarter of a century ago. We cannot long remain content with our present system—the drawn-out agony of suits for personal injuries, with all their delay, contradictions of testimony, and strain on the victims.”

“I should think not,” murmured Josephine, “if we have any common-sense.”

She was silent a moment, then she said, "So far as I can see, poor John McGillicuddy, even if he recovers anything, is certain to have a hard time. Indeed, the only bright spot in the entire outlook is that he may decide to give his case to Harold."

I sympathized with my wife's ambitions as a grandmother, yet her concluding remark struck me humorously; so much so, that I felt impelled to add this corrective for her general edification.

"At present, of course, the services of a lawyer seem indispensable in every instance of severe personal injuries for which some one else may be held responsible. But I believe that Harold will live to see the day when all such liability—not merely for injuries sustained during employment, but anywhere—will be compensated out of court by fixed and graduated rules of indemnity. Not until then shall we be rid of the carnival of litigation which congests our courts and has almost transformed them into a gambling mart. The suits for personal injuries brought by employees number but a third of such cases. The remainder are due to the crying necessities

or the greed of those disabled in the course of modern transportation or by the diverse powerful engines of modern society. To all of these the personal injury suit holds out prospects even more enticing than those of the stock market. A fortune—the means to get rich quickly—gleams within easy reach. And who spurs them on? Who fosters their hopes and even panders to their cupidity? The lawyer; who, as the high-priest and promoter of the orgy, sometimes seems the most formidable stumbling-block to reform of speculative litigation. But the reform is certain to come; for the machinery which maintains it has become too costly.”

“I suppose so,” said Josephine, as I paused, but her assent seemed a trifle reluctant, and I could follow the working of her mind which culminated in—“If so much of the law business consists of accident suits, and they are all abolished, what is to become of the poor lawyers?”

“You may rest assured, my dear,” I answered, “that Harold will be a gray-haired man by then, and very likely on the bench. At the same time, you should bear in mind that it is not the func-



tion of a philosopher to protect any man's livelihood. There was a period when a successful buccaneer was regarded as an ornamental member of society."

## VI

THE second of the two recent events, which led me to observe that we suddenly condemn as monstrous results complacently accepted yesterday, is a foster-brother to the first in that it also concerns the legal profession, and consequently the destinies of my grandson, Harold, who, as you may recall, is being groomed for future triumphs at the bar by Blackstone, Kent, Fogarty and Einstein. Instead of foster-brother I would have written "cousin," had not the word become repugnant to me by reason of the event in question. For it was owing to a cousin, to three of them, in fact—distant cousins for whom the testator cared not an iota—that what seems to me legalized highway robbery has been perpetrated.

Most people in our community had lost sight of Peter Gillespie Merrill, who was found dead in his bed a year ago. He dropped out of gen-

eral observation soon after he was fifty, and he was eighty-seven when he died. He came of well-known stock, however. One of his great-grandmothers, as the name suggests, was a Gillespie, another a Gore, and he held the same relationship—second cousin once removed—to my old fashionable friend, Gillespie Gore, as to the three individuals, two men and one woman, who have succeeded in plundering his estate. He was a bachelor, rather a recluse, preferring his own society to that of most other people, and slightly eccentric in his attire, which conformed to the fashion of an elder day. Still sheltered by the roof under which he was born, although the locality had long since been given over to boarding-houses, he rode, with almost equal assiduity, two hobbies: the collecting of old prints and hospitality to cats. As a consequence, his dwelling which, brass knocker and all, was externally a well-preserved landmark, seemed, when one crossed the threshold, despite the white paint and scrupulous absence of dust, a sort of compromise between an art gallery and a menagerie, in so much as feline pets of high and

low degree roamed at will and were accommodated with saucers.

These hobbies, so far as I could ever see, were the limit of his peculiarities. I recall meeting him in the street not many weeks before his sudden end. Chance had called me to his neighborhood, and, although I had not run across him for more than a year, he recognized me when I stopped and addressed him by name. His only apparent infirmity was a slight deafness, which he hastened to acknowledge by making a sounding-board of his hand. It struck me that his faculties were uncommonly alert for one of his age; his eye was still keen, his speech coherent and rational. Turning back with him for a block, I was surprised by his accurate familiarity with what was going on in the world.

It was found that he had left behind him two million dollars; a sum so much larger than had been written down in the estimation of those who pretend to know what others possess as to inspire the eager inquiry—where did it come from? He was admittedly thrifty, but the magnitude of his savings was wholly out of proportion to

his patrimony. Presently, it transpired that, unknown to all but a very few, he had been a shrewd investor all his days; one of those calculating individuals with small expenses who possess the knack of turning over their securities at frequent intervals with unfailing profit.

By the terms of Peter Merrill's will, drawn with precision three years before his death, he endowed comfortably his house-keeper and two servants who had tended him for a generation, gave his valuable collection of prints to our museum of fine arts, made rather elaborate provision for the care of his cats for life, remembered by legacies several more or less impecunious acquaintances not of his blood, left a gold-headed cane, an ancestral snuff-box, and a pair of alabaster vases to Gillespie Gore, and apportioned all the rest and residue of his estate among certain charitable and educational institutions.

A very sensible will, so every one said. The money was old Peter's, and he was free to deal with it as he chose. Any obligation imposed on the testator by the tie between him and his sole next of kin, as Gillespie Gore was supposed to

be—that of second cousin once removed—was fully satisfied by the gift of the heirlooms specified, for the two men had seen nothing of each other for many years. Gillespie Gore is comfortably off. I doubt if he cherished expectations, unless, possibly, the furtive hope that the old gentleman might endeavor to keep death at bay by dying intestate. It may be taken for granted that he never harbored for a moment the suggestion that his kinsman was of other than sound and disposing mind.

You may imagine, therefore, my dismay, when it was reported to me that Peter Merrill's will was to be contested.

“By whom and for what reason?” I inquired indignantly of the informant, my grandson, Harold.

“Three second cousins once removed, who live in the suburbs, and who, if the will is set aside, would inherit as heirs-at-law. No reason is necessary if a jury can be induced to take pity on them and decide that, because they are poor, the testator ought to have left his money to them rather than to cats and charities. Page

& Waterbury have entered an appearance for the contestants, and our firm represents the executor. We ought to win, but it's no walkover. Matthew J. Page, tremulous with the hope of putting his paw on two millions in gilt-edged securities, is no pipe-dream adversary before a jury."

The cool artlessness of this statement drew from me the retort, "But surely the law requires more adequate reasons for setting aside a will than the prejudices of a jury and the greed of counsel."

My grandson laughed and cocked his head on one side. "Good for you, grandpa. I never heard it stated quite so sarcastically before." He proceeded to light a cigarette, and, throwing one leg over the arm of the easy chair in which he was sitting, continued: "Of course, there are only three legal grounds on which any will can be broken: lack of testamentary capacity, undue influence, or defective attestation—as the jury invariably points out. If the jury doesn't like the will, it has to find one of these. But that's easy. It simply has to say—'the pro-



visions don't suit us, and he must have been crazy.' The old-fashioned doctrine that a testator has vested rights has been virtually exploded. It's argued now that the dead will be dead a long time, and that the claims of the living are chiefly to be considered. No one blames a jury for breaking the will of a man who disinherits his children. It's the same rule of thumb justice which impels the jury in an accident case to disdain the strict letter of the law and soak the defendant a little in order to give the poor devil who is knocked out some pecuniary salve for his injuries. I'm inclined, however, to agree with you, grandpa, that the pendulum has swung too far. It's one thing to protect children or very near kin from the eccentricities of senile or jaundiced testators, and quite another to give the encouragement of society to marauding attacks organized by remote relatives for the sake of plunder. The big fortunes are a temptation; a lot of money is so necessary nowadays. And the lawyers who conduct the attacks are lured by the large fees."

"Piratical," I murmured with the fervor of

one brought up to believe that a last will and testament was a sacred document.

"Now take our case," my grandson resumed, with the decorum of one arguing the matter with himself and at the same time enlightening ignorance. "Everybody knows that Mr. Peter Merrill made just the will he intended, and, though a little queer, was of sound mind. But think what a chance—a splendid gambling chance—for the second cousins for whom he did not care a button. If dust can be thrown in the jury's eyes in one way or another they will get the goods. A splendid gambling chance for them and for Page & Waterbury—one of the few chances of quick profits we have left. Democracy means to be moral, but it sympathizes with gambling chances and hates to see them all disappear. No one can be perfectly sure what will happen. The other side has got hold of a nurse whom the house-keeper discharged as incompetent, and who will testify, undoubtedly, that the testator's partiality for cats was the vagary of a lunatic. Not very many wills are broken, but a pitched battle is usually in store

nowadays for the legatees of any one who leaves a lot of money and passes over his or her relations."

Notwithstanding this lucid summary, which revealed that even in the mind of the generation just in the saddle there are misgivings in regard to current conditions, I was not wholly prepared for the upshot.

Two months later Peter Merrill's will came up for probate before a single judge, and after minute cross-examination of the attesting witnesses in the hope of discovering some flaw in the attestation, Mr. Matthew Page opened his attack by calling to the stand, as my grandson had predicted, the discharged nurse, a very pretty and plausible young woman, who told a glib story of the testator's eccentricities concerning cats. How he treated them like children, dandling and even embracing them; how he visited every pet in turn, morning and night; how half a dozen slept in his room, three upon his bed; and how these special favorites occupied chairs at the dinner-table. Although forbidden under the rules of law from stating her opinion

regarding the testator's sanity, the witness managed nevertheless to volunteer the remark that he was mad as a March hare. Whereupon the judge, as in duty bound, sustained counsel's objection by the words, "You are not allowed to say that, and I strike it out." But he spoke mildly, and it was obvious to me, who was present in court ready to testify to the contrary, that he was impressed by her good looks.

Be that as it may, she proved a star witness, for when Mr. Fogarty took her in hand and endeavored on cross-examination to discredit her testimony, by inquiring into the circumstances of her discharge, she failed to become ruffled and threw the blame in so appealing a fashion on the house-keeper, whose appearance betokened a sour disposition, that I must admit I understood what my grandson meant in declaring later that a jury would be disposed to side with such a peach. The contestants supplemented this testimony with that of a chore man, once in the employ of Peter Merrill, but not provided for in the will, who gave similar details regarding the testator's inordinate predilection for cats. When

this witness had left the stand, Mr. Fogarty rested with the mysterious air of one who, having exhibited to his opponent certain telling cards, is clearly reserving others up his sleeve. When the judge decided to admit the will to probate, he seemed slightly pained, as if an injustice had been done him, but Harold assured me in a whisper that this was for stage effect only and that the real contest would take place on appeal before a jury.

I have never been able to comprehend why two trials on the facts are requisite in a will case if one suffices to convict of murder. I have been told on inquiry—invariably by lawyers—that but for the opportunity to probe into the influences surrounding a testator, which this preliminary day in court affords, the machinations of the designing might often escape detection; and that few attorneys would like to see the time-honored custom discontinued. I understand better, since the culmination of the Peter Merrill will contest, why they do not favor any change. The upshot to which I referred was briefly this: My grandson announced to me in a cheery voice some sixty

days after the trial in the Probate Court that the case had been compromised.

"Compromised?" I repeated. "Do you mean that your clients have consented to pay those people anything?"

Harold nodded, but I could see that he already regretted having broached the subject. "Mr. Kent and Mr. Fogarty both advised a settlement," he continued. "There was a chance of losing before a jury, and we felt it our duty to impress the possibility of such a result on the several legatees who finally decided to accept less all round in order to make sure of the remainder."

"It savors of blackmail," I murmured. "Every one knows that Peter Merrill was perfectly sane, and that his will was a carefully prepared statement of his last wishes."

"Unfortunately, the lawyer who drew the will is dead."

"But surely the testimony of those disgruntled witnesses would not counterbalance that of the rest of his acquaintances, including Gillespie Gore who is himself an heir."

"It would have been just like Mr. Matt Page to suggest an aristocratic conspiracy among the testator's friends to minimize his eccentricities in order to defeat the claims of his needy kinsmen and enrich institutions already wealthy. I can assure you, grandpa," he added solemnly, "that all the partners think the compromise a very sensible one, and that, considering the risks and the amount at stake, the legatees got off lightly."

"Lightly?" I queried. "I cannot imagine paying those second cousins more than five thousand dollars apiece."

My grandson smiled compassionately. "It isn't noised about, but the terms of settlement are these: The will is admitted to probate, but each of the three contesting heirs receives one hundred thousand dollars. Mr. Matt Page gets forty thousand in cash for his services and our firm forty-five thousand. The amounts paid counsel won't appear in the compromise agreement filed in court lest they should attract the attention of the judge whose salary is so small."

I do not know whether I was more dazed by



the figures or by my grandson's placid utterance of them. My eyes felt like saucers as I blurted out:

"Nearly four hundred thousand at one fell swoop! That's going some, as you young people express it. The old-fashioned buccaneers were greenhorns compared to their successors."

Harold smiled at my recourse to his vernacular, but he had his defence against my strictures ready. "Yes, it's going a little, I admit, but nothing compared with what happens in business. The bankers who float bonds get a much larger rake-off. A will case like Mr. Merrill's doesn't come along every day—probably not oftener than half a dozen times in any successful lawyer's career. And just consider how long he has to wait at the outset before he obtains any business at all. If a lawyer isn't employed by one of the big corporations, or doesn't go in for personal injury suits for the plaintiff, the pickings of his profession are apt to be pretty small compared with the cost of modern living. And so when a fat thing does turn up, he owes it to himself and his family to make a fairly remunera-

tive charge. Two or three fees like that would make a man comfortable for life. As I explained before, Mr. Peter Gillespie Merrill is dead and can never come to life again, and the money is his no longer. Everybody is contented; and, as all concerned have gone off smiling and happy, I don't quite see, grandpa, with due respect, why you should introduce the only discordant note."

I am sure you will agree with me that my grandson is cut out for a lawyer. No one could listen to his harangue without admitting its lucid and cogent plausibility. For a moment I felt convicted of a gratuitous attempt to deprive the legal fraternity of its daily bread, and I congratulated myself that Josephine was not in the room. It is, indeed, too late for a grandfather to challenge the world's conclusion that a dead testator is no more formidable than a dead lion. Between his legatees and his heirs the courts have ceased to interfere, provided, as Harold says, every one goes off smiling and happy. Moreover, the roll-call of lawyers is growing every year, and to preserve their social status,

which has been sadly overshadowed by the financial magnates, some method of making up for the lean years must be preserved.

At the same time, what a very costly proceeding for everybody concerned except the attorneys and the predatory next of kin is this modern looting of what the dead leave behind them. In this era of dazzling fortunes swiftly accumulated, the gambling chance—the hope of obtaining something for nothing—especially when dignified by the legal sanction of very thin blood relationship, has a peculiar hold on society, which democracy seems loath to relinquish. Yet it has done away with the lottery in other attractive forms. The testator may be a dead lion, but those to whom he bequeaths his estate have substantial rights which stand to-day in dire need of some relief from the growing abuse of concerted attacks on testamentary disposition.

Perhaps inertia, due to the dread of a much occupied nation to abandon the beaten path—not merely beaten, but macadamized by tradition—is the most formidable stumbling-block to reform. I realized this as soon as I broached my

disgust with the existing situation to my friend Judge Sims, another member of my dinner club, who in his official capacity has much to do with wills. He admitted and deplored the evil, allowing to pass unchallenged my statement that at least sixty per cent of will contests are nothing but a legalized form of extortion or robbery. But when I inquired why we continue to put up with it, he frowned ominously and remarked that it was not easy to decide which of the two cornerstones of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence is the more precious—the free man's right to do as he sees fit with his own, including the solemn privilege of cutting off his own children with a shilling, or the free man's right as an heir at law to dispute testamentary capacity.

Unenlightened, but not venturing unaided to measure arguments with an expert in his own field, I bethought me of enlisting for a pecuniary consideration the services of my grandson Harold to prime me for the fray. Consequently, the next time I met the judge, I had ready for him the retort:

“We shall never get rid of the abuse until we

either authorize the probate of wills before death, or adopt and give due weight to the formalities which attend the execution of wills in countries where the civil law prevails. There are many who would go a step further and imitate the civil law in forbidding the disinheritance of children beyond a certain point—as in France, for instance, where gifts to others by will may not exceed one-half of an estate if the testator leaves one child, one-third if he leaves two, and one-fourth if a greater number. As a practical matter with us the jury finds in nine cases out of ten that the man who cuts his own children off with a shilling is crazy; and we have already set precise limits by statute to the amount of which any husband or wife may deprive the other. There are strong grounds for holding that the father of a family owes at least one-third of his accumulations, willy-nilly, to his children, whose unfilial qualities may be due to inheritance of his own peculiarities. But be that as it may, the essential thing is to devise some method of keeping at bay and thwarting the cupidity of the marauding army of collateral relatives, beginning with

nephews and nieces and stretching out to remotest next of kin."

Judge Sims looked at me with the reserved air of one who, though he sympathizes, is appalled by the difficulties, and who consequently resents the fluent criticisms of the amateur. "One matter at a time, if you please." And then he continued, as Harold had predicted—for the judge is erudite in his way—"The probate of wills before death was attempted in Michigan nearly thirty years ago—in 1883, I believe. But the Supreme Court of the State held the act of the legislature unconstitutional. The express ground of the decision was that the statute permitting the establishment of wills during lifetime, after notice to heirs-at-law, was defective in that it had failed to require similar notice to be given to a wife. The testator in the case had utilized the statute for the express purpose of excluding his wife and a son from the benefits of the will. One member of the court proceeds to point out the inherent lack of legal logic in the entry of a judicial decree which may never bind the party seeking it. For what would prevent the maker

of a will from revoking it, altering its provisions or moving into another State and dying elsewhere in a totally different testamentary state of mind? To proclaim as valid a judicial decree which might never be binding on anybody would introduce a revolutionary and grotesque legal novelty."

Although, thanks to my grandson's research, I had read the opinion of the court in question, I refrained from an immediate response out of deference to this awful combination of unconstitutionality and total failure in legal logic. It may be that these will prove insurmountable obstacles to ante-mortem probate in Anglo-Saxon territory, for this flower of American western civilization has never blossomed again since nipped in the bud by the frosty breath of the Supreme Court of the State from whose necessities it sprung.

Yet what a precious anodyne to the sensibilities of many a testator would be the knowledge that he was free, if he chose, to establish his will before death without fear of subsequent attack from distant relatives whom he wished to exclude



from its provisions. Nor as a layman was I much moved when my friend Judge Sims subsequently expressed misgivings based on a haunting fear lest the comely and designing second wives of aged men would steer them into court for the fell purpose of testamentary plunder. Is it not reasonable to assume that, if ante-mortem probate were legal, the courts would apply or the legislature prescribe such safeguards in the way of examination of the parties by the judge before whom wills were proved as would render the possible miscarriage of justice insignificant in comparison with that rampant to-day under the protection of our legal system from one end of this easy-going country to the other?

But an avenue for partial reform is indicated by the very language of the same court which declared the statute authorizing the probate of wills before death to be in violation of the State Constitution. The passage merits reproduction exactly as I read it to my cautious legal friend Judge Sims, from volume fifty-six of the Michigan reports:

“This statute, which was probably designed

to prevent the unseemly and disgraceful attempts, too often made, to defeat the enforcement of the last will of persons whose competency to deal with their own affairs was never doubted or interfered with, has been so drawn as to remove none of the difficulties, but rather to make them worse. It is a singular and, in my judgment, a very unfortunate spectacle to see a man compelled to enter upon a contest with the hungry expectants of his own estate, and litigate, while living, with those who have no legal claims whatever upon him, but who may subject him to ruinous costs and delays in meeting such testimony as is apt to be paraded in such cases. The practice, which has usually prevailed in civil law countries, and also is said to have been customary in various parts of England (see *Seld. Ecc. Jur. Test.* 5), of having wills executed or declared in solemn form, or acknowledged before reputable public officers and a sufficient number of disinterested witnesses to render it unlikely that the testator is not acting with capacity and freedom, has been approved by the continued experience of most countries, and has saved them

from the post-mortem squabbings and contests on mental condition which have made a will the least secure of all human dealings, and made it doubtful whether in some regions insanity is not accepted as the normal condition of testators. There is no sensible reason why a will, which is always revocable and contingent, should not be established, presumptively at least, by such an acknowledgment as will suffice to prove a deed which is irrevocable."

How haphazard the preparations for the making of a will in this country are apt to be! Whom does the average lawyer invite to attest the solemn disposition of his client's estate? His stenographer, some student in the office, or casual acquaintance on the same floor, wholly unfamiliar with the testator, if not mere birds of passage, whose faculties, perfunctorily exercised, can recall nothing but the hazy fact of signature when tested subsequently on the witness-stand.

Why, in connection with one of the most serious of human affairs, should we disdain the use of ceremonials which would give an inherent probative force to our action? If it be argued that

dying testators cannot always procure the attendance of an official whose affidavit and seal would carry weight, and that in a free country they ought to be at liberty to call on strangers to attest their signatures rather than on friends who know them and might babble, it would seem reasonable that legislatures should at least establish some presumption of validity in favor of wills executed under more formal conditions. Let the formalities—the safeguards—be as elaborate as those who frame our laws deem necessary. If they share the popular Anglo-Saxon prejudice against the notary as a routine functionary who might become an easy tool, it would be a simple matter to require also the affidavit of physicians, or even of a judge, after careful interrogation, as a condition precedent to the erection of a rampart between testators and their greedy kin.

Surely our society needs some such protection. The blackmail and extortion current here are practically unknown in foreign countries where the notarial system of attestation prevails. If it were the law that a will carefully executed under prescribed forms should have the

presumption of validity, and could be set aside only by convincing testimony, we should have taken a long step toward checking the crying abuse of speculative attacks on wills. Assuming also—though this is not yet settled—that there may be inherent difficulties, either of law or policy in the way of probate before death, the present situation might be further improved by imposing some restraint on the action of distant relatives. When a wealthy testator dies childless, his brothers and sisters, and even nephews and nieces, may not unnaturally hope to share his bounty, though his right is an absolute one, under existing law, to leave all his property to strangers or charities. But the claims of more distant kin—comprehensively grouped as cousins—seem so tenuous that they could, with advantage to the moral sense of the community, be limited by a provision that an attack on a will by persons not nearer in relationship to the testator than a fixed degree should not be undertaken except with the assent of the attorney-general of the State or other substituted proctor.

As I detailed these animadversions in the presence of my friend Judge Sims, I noticed that he nodded approvingly from time to time, and, though he was evidently obsessed by the difficulties of modifying an ancient system of procedure, I felt sure that my remarks would not lie fallow in his mind. But when I repeated them to my grandson, he reflected a moment, and then indulged in the breezy comment:

"That would read well on paper, grandpa. But I don't believe the lawyers would stand for it."

"On the contrary, Harold," I answered; "and here, perhaps, my years and experience enable me to discriminate better than you. The lawyers are among the first to advocate any reform—though it affect themselves—provided they can find time to consider it carefully. The chief opposition will emanate from that portion of the community which regards a will contest as a piratical means of securing a windfall under sanction of law. But you and I are both bound to believe that they are only a small minority in our beloved country."

## VII

**I**S the modern woman as intrinsically unselfish and lovable as her predecessor?

I was present yesterday at what the newspapers would call a symposium where the foregoing proposition was considered, and where I was the only man. Of course, a symposium was originally a merry feast with drinking. But on this occasion we had nothing more convivial than iced tea. Nor could the meeting appropriately be termed merry; on the contrary, it was eminently serious, though on the piazza in midsummer. My capacity was that of bottleholder or prompter to my wife Josephine, who suddenly found herself in the thick of a discussion concerning the modern woman with her daughter Winona, her daughter-in-law Lavinia, and Mrs. Mabel Flanders Foote as antagonists; a discussion which, starting with the appearance of the harvest moon, lasted until that brilliant orb, which at this season of the year has a ten-



dency to sit up all night, had sunk below the horizon. Three against one. A most unequal contest from point of view of numbers. Even when I secretly agreed with the adversaries, I proffered Josephine moral and statistical support. But her protection lay in the inability of the allies to agree among themselves, which caused each of them in turn to swap sides at critical stages of the controversy.

It was Mrs. Foote who put the inquiry just after we had finished our evening meal; and Lavinia's exclamation, "What an interesting subject!" reflected the general consciousness that here was a question which had been secretly haunting us.

"Let's eliminate the non-essentials in the first place," continued my daughter-in-law. "Votes for women to begin with. Of course this is a burning issue among us all. For example, Mrs. Foote and I believe that they are coming; that human society as well as woman will be the gainers thereby, and that our sex is equal to the responsibility. Winona, who is quite as intelligent and no less solicitous for

woman's welfare, is rootedly hostile. The arguments on either side are worn threadbare. Every one knows them by heart. Democracy has enough to digest already in universal suffrage for man. Women should differentiate themselves from men, not imitate them; and can accomplish more by indirection than by becoming an integral factor of practical politics. Statistics prove that the experiment is a failure in the communities where it is being tested. What does woman in this country of all countries hope to gain by the ballot? She has in most of our jurisdictions separate property rights, equal custody with her husband over her children, is not obliged, as in England, to prove that her husband is a brute as well as a libertine before she can obtain a divorce from him, and, in short, she has her foot, metaphorically speaking, on the neck of man. And we reply that woman's self-respect demands it. That its withholding is an implication of inferiority undeserved. That enlarged responsibility which breeds intelligence should not be shirked. That the indirect or direct whisper of the pillow or hearth

is a toy expedient compared with the concrete ballot which can be counted. And most vital of all, that votes for women will prove the key to many industrial and social reforms for her relief and the betterment of society."

Like most men, I dare say, when I hear the vibrant words "Votes for women," the modern equivalent of "Female suffrage," which somehow had a slightly opprobrious sound, I feel like stuffing cotton wool in my ears or hiding. Having long ago joined in the masculine chorus that woman can have them whenever she is able to demonstrate that they are desired by a considerable proportion of her sex, I like to think that I have washed my hands of the situation except for a polite willingness to listen under police protection to her report of progress at decent intervals. In every-day speech I am liable to employ that prudent generality, "Woman suffrage is sure to come; but the world is not ready for it." A similar amiable supineness of attitude on this subject, which my wife characterizes as craven, led me on this occasion to reinforce my daughter-in-law's concluding words with the

knowing prediction that its coming will be the result of some sudden conflagration of sentiment—a lighted straw igniting a continent—among the wage-earners in aid of some measure, either definitely moral or ameliorating feminine industrial conditions.

This was too much for Josephine, who was smarting under the recent announcement of our granddaughter, Dorothy Perkins, that she had joined the suffragettes. “Don’t forget,” she exclaimed, “that in one of the five Western States where women have the right to vote they have made themselves notorious by stuffing ballot-boxes and by active service on behalf of liquor dealers.”

To my astonishment—such is the free-masonry of women—Lavinia, instead of controverting this statement, turned on me.

“You ought to be on one side or the other, grandpapa; not on the fence. The attitude of so many men in regard to this question, on which we all feel so intensely one way or the other, is what I call smug. ‘Under which king, Bezonian? Speak or die.’”

Whereupon Lavinia brandished something which in the moonlight resembled a ballot, but which proved to be merely a section of the voluminous newspaper. She is a well-informed and keen-minded young woman, who, like her brother, Luther Hubbard, aims to be representative of our social democracy. I think in her secret soul that she regards my equally intelligent daughter Winona as aristocratic, but this is rather because of Winona's reverence for certain conventions or traditions, social and religious, than from any disapproval based on costume or manners. There was a period when the fervent exponents of democracy in certain portions of this country could not bare their necks and shoulders in company without thinking of themselves as unchaste; but the same wave of sophistication which has almost reconciled their vision to the nude in art has sterilized these frigid attempts to reform the social world. It is manifest that the woman of the future is to be neither masculine, prim, nor unprepossessing. No man could remain in the society of either of these members of my family without recognizing that the ability to express

her views clearly and without apology is far from synonymous with any desire to gloss over the distinctions of sex or to dispense with that art of pleasing, which was woman's only weapon except tears in her days of servitude. My wife Josephine has a will of her own, an appearance of firmness; but she is in reality a clinging creature. I speak of her fondly as my equal, but she knows that she is not and does not mind. In talking with Winona or Lavinia, I am conscious of facing a new dynamic force, fervent, yet well poised and executive. They tend their children and cater for their husbands with a clear-sighted devotion which seems to say, "We, the free-limbed daughters of the morning, do this out of love; and only through love may we be tethered."

If Winona wears smarter clothes, it is because she believes that woman's first duty is still to charm. But her sister-in-law's wardrobe betrays none of those domestic economies or makeshifts on which her brother Luther rather prides himself. Democratic to the core as she regards herself, Lavinia recognizes that feminine democracy,

in order to be "efficient" (to quote its watchword of the moment), must not rest content with that sumptuous trilogy, soap, water, and starch. She intends her garments to be becoming, hygienic, and not too ornate, yet harmonies of outline and color which lose nothing from her capacity to give them the essential touch with her own fingers. Their tastes are not dissimilar. Winona was athletic in her youth, and this tendency abets her ambition to continue slender and fosters the yearning for open air and liberty, which is the substitute the conventional girl, brought up in an atmosphere of Kipling, finds for open-air adventure among the primeval forces. She loves to spend the day with her children in exploring nature, and she does not disguise the joy she feels in living. Lavinia is less demonstrative, but, though incisively direct when definite issues are presented, she seeks for refreshment romantic solitudes where she can commune with the pines or the stars or the sea. Neither lacks sentiment or imagination. Their clear-browed responsiveness is a new dignity well differentiated from self-assertion. But what one



says to either is not blindly accepted as law or wisdom, as it used to be; though they simulate meekness occasionally for a purpose—especially to their husbands.

In spite of my daughter-in-law's endeavor to smoke me out, I continued to temporize by remarking that if woman's chief ground for desiring citizenship is that her rain of ballots may serve as a sort of agricultural phosphate to our social system, we ought to be assured by accurate statistics that women in the aggregate would support moral reforms more steadfastly than men.

At this juncture we heard Mrs. Foote murmur, "Woman will never be happy till she gets it"—a sort of echo to my own weak-kneed fatalism. Whereupon Lavinia exclaimed:

"Exactly. That's why I dismiss it as a non-essential; as having no real bearing on the question whether woman is more intrinsically selfish and less lovable than she used to be. And another non-essential is the divorce question."

It was evident from Lavinia's abrupt pause that she was conscious of paradox and did not

expect this statement to pass unchallenged. She took advantage of the silence which followed to explain.

"It is useless not to face the reproach that the emancipated woman is mainly responsible for the increase in divorce. Grim statistics prove indisputably that almost exactly three-quarters of the divorces granted are on the petition of wives—of injured wives—some more, some less injured, a few not at all—seeking the avenue of escape which the laws provide from the immorality, cruelty, stinginess, and sloth of man. Clergymen are too apt to discredit this or to gloss it over because it seems to suggest that they are losing their hold on our sex. So are we ourselves, because in theory woman is the protecting angel of the home. But the modern woman declines to cling to the husband who is unfaithful to her, beats her, starves her, scrimps her, forsakes her, or who is a slave to liquor."

"And as a consequence," I remarked parenthetically, "in 1906, the date at which exact tabulation ceases for the moment, over 72,000 divorces were granted in the United States.

According to the census of 1900, our country had the honor of standing second only to Japan, 55,000 against 93,000, as compared with France and Germany, with less than 9,000 apiece. The growth in the rate during the last decade shows an enormous increase over its predecessor, and it should be added that this tendency is noticeable over the civilized world."

"Scandalous," murmured Josephine. But she immediately added, "I would never have put up with being beaten, Fred; and a persistently intoxicated husband must be unendurable."

"You forget," resumed Lavinia in her clear, calm voice, "that divorce is a remedy like a surgical operation. Every household shrinks from it, but it sometimes becomes necessary, like the removal of the appendix. As these figures demonstrate, there is no question that the spiritual and economic independence of woman inclines her to escape from a repugnant marriage by dissolving the marriage tie. But does this indicate she is deteriorating? I claim not. Divorce with the right of remarriage is the relief which democracy has wrung from clerical and aristo-

cratic privilege. 'Once married, married until death,' cries the church on the authority of the Scriptures and for the integrity of the family, and still menaces with its penalties those who disobey. But the revolt is world-wide in greater or less degree. If we have utilized the relief more freely than the rest of civilization, is it not chiefly because the women of this country seek spiritual comradeship in marriage and decline to put up with the abuses and misery which those of other nations endure?"

"In other words," cried Josephine, "our women make the security of the marriage tie individual caprice instead of mutual forbearance. There are moments in the early years of every woman's married experience when, if she were free to follow her whims, she would welcome liberty, if not a change. Yet if she got either, she would, in the average case, weep her eyes out later."

I had never realized before how irretrievably I might have lost Josephine had she not been the clinging creature I have described. The reproach of the discovery was somewhat allayed

for me by her acknowledgment that she would have deplored subsequently the desperate step which seemed justified at one time, though she chose to leave me in the dark as to which of my shortcomings had worn on her most. But though her words rang in my ears, my strong academic interest in the theme struggled so effectually against the personal application that I found myself saying:

"It's a mistake to suppose that our nation has a monopoly of easy causes for divorce. On the contrary, we have never in terms gone so far as several of the Continental countries of Europe, where the marriage tie can be severed by mutual consent, or on the ground of what is called invincible aversion."

"Invincible aversion!" echoed Mrs. Mabel Flanders Foote. "A ruthless phrase. Our more euphemistic term, I suppose, is incompatibility, which in a large percentage of the divorces in this country is probably the true reason rather than one of the sundry specific grounds sanctioned by law."

Observing that she paused from a commend-

able impulse to cite chapter and verse, I hastened to supply them. "Adultery; bigamy; conviction of crime resulting in imprisonment for two years; wilful desertion for two years; habitual drunkenness for two years. These are all orthodox causes sanctioned and recommended for adoption in every State by the National Congress on Uniform Divorce Laws, some of whose members are clergymen."

"But I fail to see how the modern woman's tendency to break the marriage tie on trivial grounds can be consistent with unselfishness," asserted Josephine. "The old-fashioned wife endured too much, I agree; but the American wife of to-day refuses to endure anything."

"It is interesting to note, by way of comparison," I remarked, "that through all the provinces of our neighbor Canada—in most of which divorces are granted only by Act of Parliament—there were only 197 divorces in the ten years from 1897 to 1906, with the male petitioners slightly in the ascendant."

"In other words," soliloquized Winona, "are easy divorces indispensable to the best develop-

ment of women? Have we gone so far in this country that we ought to call a halt, or will the woman of the future be less and less inclined to hold the man she finds uncongenial?"

This was so clearly the real issue that we waited for her to proceed.

"By stating it is a non-essential, Lavinia means—and, of course, I agree with her—that as a vital remedy divorce has been universally accepted by democracy. Its propriety in cases of dire need is no longer debatable except from the strictly clerical stand-point. Those who have recourse to it lose little caste, even in fashionable society, provided their justification is clear. As a bitter remedy it provides relief from intolerable conditions which both sexes in the past, especially women, were compelled to put up with. Nor does the modern woman take seriously the church's ban against those who marry again. Save Roman Catholics, who are obliged to remain obedient or leave the church, the mass of woman-kind accepts with less and less demur the new hope of happiness which is offered, and suffers no loss of self-respect thereby. Sensitive Epis-



copalians can usually find some one to perform the marriage service. The churches ask: 'Why not be content with separation?' The obviously rational answer is, first, that to do so would put a premium on immorality and foster illicit relations such as are widely winked at by European communities on the plea of protection to the family; and, second, that the modern woman sees no reason why, because of a dreadful mistake, she should remain single for the rest of her life if a desirable opportunity for remarriage offers. Our divorce figures are alarming, but in what country are there more happy marriages—more genuine comradeship between husband and wife—than in ours?"

"And yet," interposed my wife, "if it be true that ninety-nine wives out of a hundred across the Canadian border manage to endure the treatment they receive from their husbands, it would seem as if our women were laying too much emphasis on the right to happiness, and too little on the obligation to remember that though marriage be regarded as a contract, it is the most solemn obligation in the world, to be broken

only on the direst provocation and after much spiritual struggle. One reason why the modern American girl marries hastily is that the marriage bond signifies so little to her. And her poor children become the worst sufferers."

"I hadn't nearly finished, mother," exclaimed Winona. "I was on the point of explaining why on the whole I think that we have gone too far. But as to marrying hastily—the clergy encourage that. At least any runaway couple—the girl who elopes with her father's chauffeur—can invariably find some clergyman to marry them in the middle of the night, and plume himself on it as a virtuous deed. But, at least, the modern woman marries the man she likes instead of the man she is told she ought to like. And as to the children—of course, there are two sides to that."

"Yes, indeed," said Lavinia. "The French have piled up agony on account of the children in the novel and play dealing with divorce. The child of separated parents is easily made the dramatic factor in the situation, and French writers have made the most of this appeal for

artistic purposes. But as a practical matter, is a child better off in a home where loveless discord reigns beneath a varnished surface than if committed by agreement of parties or the decree of a court to the custody of one or the other parent? As I've suggested already, divorce is a distressing remedy; it affects all concerned; perhaps it should always entail social stigma. But for womankind and mankind at large its consequences appear to me far less disastrous than to continue to endure cruel wrongs in order to preserve merely the shell of the marriage relation."

Although I should have been proud of Josephine had she discarded me in favor of some one else, if I had beaten her, I offered this historical comparison in her support:

"The degeneracy of Rome was marked by the prevalence of divorce—the putting away of wives by husbands from caprice. Conversely now, is not our American civilization suffering from a similar tendency fostered by wives? And the example promises to breed contagion for Canada's favorable showing is impaired by

the fact that more than a third of the foreign couples divorced in the United States during the last ten years were Canadians who had acquired a domicile here—presumably in most instances to take advantage of the liberality of our laws.”

“Of course, the modern woman must behave herself,” answered Winona, eager to complete her argument. “In case she does not, she cannot complain if civilization out of sheer disgust heeds the fulminations of the Catholic Church and abolishes divorce. That is what the church hopes for; its sole chance of success. Women are on trial. The laws—laws framed by men—permit us to sunder the tie which binds us to an unworthy husband. If we avail ourselves of these without sufficient cause, are we not false to our best selves? And what is sufficient cause? If we say that there can be no hard and fast rule, and that each woman must be the judge of her own necessity, surely we must at the same time insist that the mere discovery that she does not love her husband—the favorite bold, pathetic plea nowadays—is not a race-serving justifica-

tion. Otherwise the church is right, and the divorced woman places herself on the same moral level as the concubine. She must have some tangible, adequate reason."

"Assuredly. But may it not be argued that the most tangible, adequate reason of all—after a woman has tried her best and is certain—is the consciousness that she has ceased to love?"

It was my radical daughter-in-law who spoke, and I noticed Josephine shiver protestingly and glance at me by way of mute, appalled reprobation.

"I do not maintain," continued Lavinia calmly, "that the modern woman is likely or can venture for a long time to come to insist on the endurance of love—for what is incompatibility but its failure?—as the condition of permanent marriage. It is, of course, one tenet of socialism that the first obligation of husband or wife is to retain the other's affection, and that inability to do so justifies the forming of a new tie. If this seems chaotic, it is less repellent than the other extreme, which the so-called conservative elements of society still seek to en-

force, that the marriage tie shall be dissolved for no cause whatever, or for only a single cause, and that one human being's happiness shall be permanently at the mercy of another. But whether or not incompatibility be recognized in the future as a legitimate ground for divorce, we are, as Winona says, on trial; we must justify our emancipation by our behavior. Any woman who travels cannot fail to learn that, though divorce has become a world-wide institution to relieve crying needs, the foreigner, and in particular the rest of the English-speaking peoples, look with horror on the American woman's prodigal recourse to it. It equally disgusts and puzzles them. They ask, Whence the necessity? If the adage be true that the American husband is less of a despot than any man in the world, why does the American wife so constantly divorce him? Undeniably the burden is on us women to prove that our circumstances require it—that it is best for civilization that we should so frequently put away one husband and presently marry another. Are we thereby holding men up to some nobler ideal of marriage than the

rest of the world entertains? Or does it mean that the American woman is more capricious than her sisters, less stable and tender in her affections, and shallower in her social intelligence—in short, less unselfish and less lovable? If the latter be true, there must be underlying reasons. And that's what I meant by terming the divorce issue a non-essential in our discussion. Divorce is clearly a symptom either of new virtues or of grave shortcomings."



## VIII

AS my daughter-in-law paused, I found myself admiring the clever way in which she had both spiked the guns of Josephine's resentment and at the same time extricated us from the meshes of a topic which is unsavory at best. So conclusively had she made her point, that the speech by which Mrs. Mabel Flanders Foote renewed the conversation was received by us all as the first step in a transition to our real theme.

"As bearing on the attitude of the English regarding us," she said, "I heard recently an anecdote which is illuminating. A young and charming girl became infatuated with and married an English army officer, who was later ordered to India. They have five children. She lives in England by his direction, and his furlough is spent, not with her, but in killing big game. One-half of his income, which is not large, he reserves for himself, the other he sends

to his wife and children. What would an American girl say to that?"

"If she had any spirit, of course no American girl would stand it for a minute!" exclaimed Winona promptly.

"She would certainly discover some way of rectifying it," admitted my wife.

"And, of course, the poor thing just simply bears it the best way she can," said Lavinia. "The Englishwoman when bullied accepts the lot her lord and master deals out to her, and pretends to like it. She is educated to pretend to like it, and the church does its best to encourage her to think she likes it. Naturally she is horrified when the woman who declines to be treated as a mere possession asserts herself."

"It is an extreme instance of gross selfishness in her husband's class," Mrs. Foote continued, "just as wife-beating is in the lowest class, and it may be that the average Englishman is far less arbitrary in his treatment of the women of his family than the average German; but the episode is typical nevertheless. As a result, however, of pondering it, I began to ask myself

whether the American man isn't in much the same fix as the English or German woman—obliged to bear it the best he can."

"Admirable!" exclaimed Josephine, and she hastened to add, "If he bears it in any other way, his wife finds she has ceased to love him, which according to some constitutes the best ground for a divorce and marrying again."

Not being the aggressor, I watched with considerable gusto the flight of this shaft, which seemed aimed to pierce one of her daughter-in-law's ultra-modern theories which rasp Josephine at times. She does not always agree with Winona, but can invariably follow her; whereas she declares that Lavinia leads her to strange conclusions which make a lady stare.

Both of the younger women laughed melodiously, and both their replies were characteristic.

"It isn't really true that he is in the same fix; or, if he is, it's his own fault." Thus Winona.

But her sister-in-law's comment was more subtle. "Because he has the effect of being in the same fix, are we necessarily culpable? If

we are, I suppose it must follow that we are more selfish and less lovable."

As I listened to these remarks from purely feminine sources, I began to conjure up sundry testimony which seemed to bear out Mrs. Foote's deduction. Before my mind's eye trotted in single file and chronological order certain familiar, not to say hackneyed, specimens of American manhood, wearing the motley of comic-weekly or international-fiction notoriety—the industrious but unpresentable husband of a generation ago toiling at home while his wife parades her diamonds and her daughters abroad; the conscientious, matter-of-fact, persistent native lover discarded not solely for a title (English, French, or Italian), but for the social elegance, charm, and courtship graces of its possessor; the latter-day bread-winner (constantly a millionaire), an easy-going materialist unable to see that his beautiful young wife is starving to death because his aspirations are confined to the stock-market and golf; the domestic male tyrant who clamors for several children and for appetizing meals, and fails to recognize that the truly intelli-

gent woman should regard these as old-fashioned duties to be performed either by specialists or co-operative methods.

Pathetic figures these, and yet there was once color for the travesty. Undeniably the American husband absorbed in his business used to feel that his wife required nothing from him but a full pocket-book. Habitually faithful and indulgent, he took her constancy for granted, nor suspected that the lamp of feminine conjugal ardor requires trimming. It was true also that he was unpresentable in the sense that he possessed most of the solid virtues, but none of the social hypocritic graces which made the foreigner a prince of the fairy tale to the American maiden. Nor was it surprising when, as sometimes happened (for the situation bristled with paternal obstacles), she decided not to become a countess and accepted her persevering native lover instead, that she should find him matter-of-fact and unromantically domestic by comparison.

The wife of a more recent date has had grounds, too, for the complaint that the effect of the closer contact with civilization which the

new wealth has offered, both abroad and at home, to the American man has been carnal. While she studies picture-galleries, cathedrals, and settlement work (after she has finished her shopping), his enthusiasm centres on some form of athletic diversion. Instead of visiting San Paolo Fuori le Mura, he inclines to bask in an open-air café reading newspapers (from home) and experimenting with light Italian wines. All within his respectable masculine rights, of course; but how dull and almost exasperating! Might not a husband more sensitive to the world of imagination be preferable, even though he pricked up his ears occasionally at sight of another woman?

Yet in the face of this procession of interior masculine figures I found myself remarking, "Your sex must certainly agree that the American husband has redeemed himself wonderfully of late. He makes no less money than formerly, and gives his wife even more. He takes suitable vacations and spends them with her. If he goes off to kill big game, she has the chance to accompany him. She can be just as sure of his con-

stancy as ever, but she has far less cause to think of him as unpresentable. He not infrequently passes for English or Russian in the capitals of Europe. If he is still unable to tell a woman that he is in love with her, when he is not, so convincingly as some, he has learned the importance of creating an illusion in the mind of her whom he desires to marry. Though he may occasionally dodge a gallery in favor of golf, his efforts to render himself a fit companion for his wife have been so eager and docile that he is beginning to be puzzled and even to ask himself, In what respect have I failed? What more does she expect from me? And by way of reaction some invidious souls are beginning to inquire, Can it be that we have spoiled her? Can she even prepare an appetizing meal if she does the cooking, or know how it should be prepared in case she does not?"

"In too many cases, no, alas!" So pleaded Mrs. Foote to the last count of my indictment. Then, with the suppleness characteristic of the well-equipped club-woman, she continued: "You must bear in mind, however, that some serious



thinkers maintain that the home in its old-fashioned sense belongs to the past. That more and more the drudgery of household life will be obviated by co-operative devices—the preparation of food in wholesale quantities by expert workers outside, and, if I may so term it, the reincarnation of the domestic servant. It would be interesting and a big feather in her bonnet,” she added musingly, “if the American woman who has persistently refused to enter domestic service herself should atone for the seeming inconsistency she displays in haunting intelligence offices the moment her husband makes money, by raising household work for pay to the dignity of other labor, and thus making real George Herbert’s verse, written nearly three centuries ago:

“‘A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgery divine.  
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,  
Makes that and the action fine.’”

“And her first step,” exclaimed Josephine incisively, “should be to treat housework with dignity herself, as something worthy—a fine art

even. To cook her husband's meals or superintend her household with the same enthusiasm to attain perfect results as the mechanic erecting a building or a sculptor chiselling his block. We were speaking just now of invincible aversion. This might pardonably become the eventual attitude of any husband toward the woman who daily set before him unsavory messes, or who treated her domestic duties as so many chores to be hurried through sketchily or heedlessly. We pride ourselves that the day of the subservient, timidly acquiescing, blindly adoring woman is over, though she had her virtues, poor thing; but if her modern successor neglects to give domestic efficiency the first place on her programme, she is certain to compare very unfavorably with her great-grandmother in the long run."

Notwithstanding the seriousness of Josephine's remarks, I noticed my daughter and daughter-in-law exchange glances of what appeared to be amusement.

"We don't dispute that you are right, mother dear," responded Winona. "But surely you

exonerate both Lavinia and me from setting unsavory messes before our husbands."

My wife looked a little disconcerted, and no wonder. For, though I have a suspicion that when my daughter married she could not have poached an egg for her husband had it been her lot to walk into the kitchen, and that his digestion was sorely tried by her early struggles with inefficient cooks, it must be admitted that she has triumphed in the end, but at the cost, I believe, of ten dollars a week, which she appears to be able to afford. As for my son David's wife, she is ostensibly a born artist; that is, she frequently demonstrates her gastronomic skill in the family circle by preparing on a blazer dishes so consummately appetizing that I am invariably helped a second time; and, though she is merely the presiding genius of her household on ordinary occasions, she is certainly a creditable exponent of democratic efficiency.

But Josephine proved equal to the occasion. "You, Winona," she said, "have learned by bitter experience and a comfortable income. I did my best when you were eighteen to familiar-

ize you with food values, but you were obdurate. Like most modern girls, you thought your soul above them, and that such material things could wait. If your husband had been a poor man, he would have been miserable while you were learning. In Lavinia, I admit, David found a culinary jewel from the outset; but she is a bright exception in the galaxy of native-born women. I exclude both of you, however, from my arguments, for each of you keeps several servants. I had in mind the ninety and nine women out of a hundred—those who have no servants or only a single one. Especially the latter, for they are at their wits' end to secure competent assistants. The face of the American woman is set against domestic service, and yet at the same time she is clamoring for some one to be her servant. We are dependent on the foreign-born, the overflow of Europe. When this supply gives out, what is to become of us? There is only one remedy; Mrs. Foote is absolutely right—we must dignify domestic service; take away the social stigma which is attached to it and raise it to the level of other manual pursuits, so that

the self-respecting American girl need not be driven into the store or factory, but may turn her hands and her head to what the average woman prefers at heart to everything else—some kind of household employment.”

Perhaps I should have realized that the aspersions cast by me on the meals which the average American woman sets before her husband and children would precipitate sooner or later a discussion of that ever-burning but threadbare topic, the servant question. I noticed in the clear moonlight that every trace of amusement had vanished from the faces of the other disputants; that Winona appeared wistful but harassed, Mrs. Foote eagerly acquiescent yet pensive, and that my daughter-in-law's evident enthusiasm was tempered by sundry carking doubts. The spirit moved me to say:

“On certain subjects you perceive grand-mama is more progressive than any of you.”

“Not more progressive. I agree with every word. Only—” Lavinia dwelt long enough on the qualifying conjunction to permit Josephine to interject:

“But for you, Fred, I think we would have

avoided this particular topic on such a heavenly night."

If she spoke less urbanely than is her wont, it may have been because the form of address which I had employed sounds endearing only on the lips of the third generation. "But since you have dragged it in," she continued, "I acknowledge it as a hobby. I am constantly surprised that the clever American women who are perpetually agitating some issue do not unite and grapple in dead earnest with this most vital and threatening of all modern feminine problems. Every one groans, but the situation seems to paralyze us and we avoid concerted action. It isn't the rich or the well-to-do who are chiefly concerned. Exorbitant wages plus much travail of the spirit will provide them with servants enough to last our time. It's the every-day woman of restricted income. Our upper classes cherish the fatuous idea that presently the native-born girl will change her mind under the spur of pecuniary necessity."

"Never," murmured Lavinia and Mrs. Foote in the same breath.

"Never, undoubtedly, under present condi-

tions," continued Josephine. "We all of us know perfectly well that we in her shoes would prefer any other occupation to that which keeps us incessantly at the beck and call of another woman who treats us with disdain as social inferiors."

This was so eminently a lady's battle that I was glad to hold my tongue and listen.

"But, mother, how are we to manage practically? Ideally, the existing state of affairs is indefensible and distracting. But an eight-hour day would leave us without a maid in many an emergency, and a relay system would bankrupt most people." It was Winona who spoke, still wistful and still harassed.

"The eight-hour day is not the solution. I have no patience with the eight-hour day. A woman employed in housework doesn't labor at the top of her powers like a mechanic or mill-operative," answered Josephine, who had evidently taken the bit of this special topic between her teeth and had no mind to relinquish it. "Neither is to treat her as a member of the family the solution—that specious but exploded prod-



uct of half a century ago when the social differences between nearly all classes in this country were inconsiderable. She doesn't wish to be so treated any more than the clerk, stenographer, or trained nurse desires it, all of whom maintain their independence by contract as distinguished from servitude. She should have clearly defined duties and definite hours of exemption from every call, and above all she must be regarded as an individual like other employees, not hectored and required to be humble. A trained nurse has duties more trying to the sensibilities than any maid, yet she preserves her self-respect. And she, on her side, must be prepared to offer a certificate of efficiency to dignify her calling: the equivalent of a diploma setting forth her attainments, which shall be the measure of her wages. If the poor man is wise, he will demand one from the woman he hopes to marry. But I'm sure that the next generation will insist on civil-service examinations for cooks. You needn't smile. The paucity of really proficient household assistants on this side of the water—indeed, all over the world, if rumor be true—is one of the

social evils of the day. As to details—the precise ways and means—they are for you younger and better-equipped women to work out. As Fred says, I speak only from the point of view of a grandmother.”

As Josephine concluded, there was a ripple of sound which was partly a sigh and partly spontaneous applause. She had not been interrupted, which signified to me they were listening to home truths which could not be gainsaid. This tribute condoned, as it were, my offence in having unwittingly let this lion loose. The simile is not my own, for it was Mrs. Foote who now asserted:

“Every word is true. The subject lies like a lion in the pathway of the industrial woman and the woman of limited means, not to mention all the rest of us. Until we do something definite and effective there is not the smallest hope that the native-born American girl will consent to relieve the existing stringency.”

“And until we succeed in doing something,” said Lavinia, “I don’t see but that the modern woman will have to admit” (and here she turned toward me) “that this shortcoming is a sign that

she is more selfish than she used to be. In other words, that in her desire for individuality and a broad horizon she has managed to neglect her nearest duties."

I do not know whether I was the more pleased by my daughter-in-law's logic or her magnanimity. It remained for Winona to complete the confession and at the same time to minimize it. "My conscience told me to eat humble-pie; but I'm glad that you've done it for me, Lavinia, in such philosophic terms," said she. "But in what other respects are we spoiled, father? You, as the champion of the down-trodden American man, intimated that we were."

"Exactly the question I was about to ask," cried Lavinia with new animation.

"And I was treasuring it up for the first opportunity," added Mrs. Foote.

I felt myself suddenly woefully outnumbered, like one who is beset by three in a narrow road; yet I strove to array my wits. Was it wifely loyalty or the belief that I had nothing valuable to adduce which caused Josephine to come to my relief?

"Children—good people all," she said—"do

you realize what the hour is? I cannot permit you to keep this down-trodden American husband up all night."

"Just a moment," cried Winona, and as she leaned toward me in token of her earnestness, her mobile, spirited face took on in the moonlight a celestial aspect denied to the lords of creation. Obviously her womanly self-esteem, wounded by my thrust, yearned to vindicate itself.

"I think I can state in a few sentences just what he—or any man—would be able to allege, and our answer to it. Spoiled? Less unselfish and less lovable? From his stand-point, yes; from ours, no. Egotists—that's the favorite crucial charge. That the absorption of the modern American woman in her own personality and self-development renders her deaf to her domestic responsibilities. That in this age of keen competition, when man's energies must be completely fixed on his work if he hopes for distinction, she acts as a clog because of her vanity, ignorance, and disdainful regard of economy. That if she needs a carrot she buys a peck, and keeps his nose everlastingly at the

grindstone to satisfy her helpless extravagance. That she lays stress on her own career when, except in the case of genius, a married woman should have none. That she overindulges her children and encourages her daughters to grow up in self-sufficient ignorance of everything which will fit them to be housewives and mothers. Have I run the scale of our failings as you interpret them?"

The inquiry was manifestly addressed to me, but Josephine took upon herself to answer it. "What a painfully accurate picture of the modern woman, Winona! No man could put it half so understandingly. You have omitted nothing but the diminution of that tenderness which used to be her essential weakness, yet her essential strength."

"Now, if I may say so, you are talking like a grandmother indeed, mama dear."

"Do not mind her; go right on, Winona," said my daughter-in-law soothingly.

"Her essential weakness, yet her essential strength. It should have been included, and it chimes in with the rest," continued Winona.

“I suppose there must be some color to these aspersions, but it’s chiefly the color which comes from contrast, the color given it by man petulant because we have left the niche which he prescribed for us, and have stepped out into the world. The blue line which St. Cuthbert drew in Durham Cathedral, beyond which no woman should pass, is still pointed out to the visitor, and it was but a few feet inside the porch. What a stride to the position she has reached to-day! Though even to-day, as has been pointed out, the Englishwoman still lacks equal custody with her husband over her children, and must bear his infidelities without redress provided they are clandestine and not brutal. For us over here, these glaring wrongs have been righted. It is our assertion of subtler but no less imperative needs, not yet universally recognized, which draws forth the diatribes of men and the hostility of the conventional or old-fashioned portion of our sex. For instance, our right to face and comprehend the real facts of life and place our own construction on them; the married woman’s right not to be treated with parsimony in money

matters, and to have her domestic labors at least abstractly rated as a money contribution; the single woman's right and need to support herself regardless of precedent and to safeguard her industrial status. And as to tenderness, does the woman of to-day lack depth of devotion for her children, and for the husband whom she loves and who remains worthy of her love? It is only because she refuses longer to keep turning her other cheek, like a patient Griselda, to the man who starves her love by his selfishness or ill-treatment that the surface world is disposed to rate her as metallic and shallow."

As my daughter finished her spirited reply, I felt moved to cry "Bravo!" which was spontaneous and far removed from irony. It proved, however, that I would have done better to adhere to my policy of non-interference. For at the sound of my voice she suddenly turned on me with a directness suggestive of a Goneril or a Regan rather than a Cordelia.

"But if it be true that we are spoiled—that in our righteous protest against ancient thralldom we have overstepped the bounds and are running



riot—who is to blame? Not ourselves solely, but the men who have ceased to be our masters and who permit us to be extravagant, capricious, and egotistical. However modern she may be, however impatient of restraint, every woman loves in her heart to be forced to curb herself by some one stronger than she. If we waste men's money and neglect our wifely duties, why do they not interfere and compel reform? They are still the physical masters of creation. No, the modern man stands between two dilemmas: either his grievances against the modern woman are in the main without foundation, and he knows it, or he is unfitted to exercise his masculine prerogatives."

All the women eagerly applauded this sentiment. I felt discomfited, yet it was on the tip of my tongue to point out that if the American husband ventures to raise his voice above a whisper in token of authority, his outraged wife leaves him and takes the baby (over which she has equal custody) with her; but the others had risen and I heard my wife saying summarily:

"It's an absorbing subject; and we've had an

illuminating discussion. We can't all agree about the modern woman; but the American man as usual comes out second best."

"Yes," I assented mournfully, "That seems to be his destiny. And yet we are constantly reminded that he is the best husband in the world."

## IX

“**I** DO trust you draw the line at old-age pensions.”

The remark was addressed to me by my neighbor, Hugh Armitt Dawson, in the lounging-room of his summer palace at Ocean-Lea where a party of both sexes was gathered after luncheon.

The shade of deprecation in his tone, inspired doubtless by consciousness that he was the host, was contradicted by his failure to await my response—thus showing that he suspected me of the worst—for he proceeded as follows:

“It is both absurd and futile for a citizen of a democratic country to profess disbelief in democracy. I have said more than once to some of you that I am second to none in loyalty to our national principles and institutions. Is it surprising, however, that persons in my position—men of considerable substance through no wrong-doing—should talk intemperately nowadays? Be goaded into saying more than we

actually mean? Reflect a moment. We have seen cherished landmark after landmark disappear within a surprisingly short period. Less than a generation ago it was axiomatic that a human being could do as he chose with his own—conduct and enlarge his business without let or hindrance, enjoy the increment of sagacious investments in the shape of stock dividends, make a testamentary disposition of property which the courts would protect, bequeath his estate at death without curtailment (except in rare emergencies due to war), and in general feel secure as to those rights of property which the strong minds of immemorial generations have termed vested and sacred. Society—a noisy portion of it—has stepped in and revolutionized this tradition. One may be indicted to-day who transacts business in the old-fashioned method. You, Mr. Philosopher”—he waved his hand at me—“assure me that a progressive legacy tax, the imposition of a higher rate on my comparative abundance than on my neighbor’s scantier possessions, is an emblem of enlightened justice for the reason that I am better able to bear the bur-

den than he. I am unable to discern the equity or the logic of such a discrimination, but I submit to it as the established law. So, too, I recognize that it is within the power of the courts to set my well-considered ante-mortem wishes at naught by entering into a partnership with my contesting heirs and my legatees to frame a will repugnant to my intentions. As a good American I bow with all the grace at my command to the decision of the majority in these matters, whatever my private feelings. But I cannot forbear to utter my warning against the measure at which society is now casting unmistakable sheep's-eyes, which might fairly be defined as a stride in furtherance of public bankruptcy. When the State says to the proletariat (let us substitute 'plain people' if you prefer), 'On reaching a certain age you will be supported from the public till,' the entire social structure, the key-stones of which are thrift, ambition, filial affection, and becoming pride, is imperilled. Can you imagine a greater menace to the foundations of organized society than such a standing invitation to inebriety and shiftless-

ness? It would discountenance saving, put a premium on heedless living, encourage children to let their aged parents shift for themselves, and serve to atrophy all those qualities the flower of which is manly self-respect."

Mr. Dawson knows how to marshal his arguments effectively and at the same time appear to emulate reasonableness. Those present gave unmistakable signs of approval, which encouraged him to add the portentous words:

"No economic system will stand it."

Even Josephine who, in view that I was under fire, might have been expected to abstain from applause, saw fit to remark, "The generosity of wage earners toward their aged relations is a constantly impressive moral lesson to those of us who are better off. If this pious incentive were taken away would not the world be the worse for it?"

"And there is another factor in the case, Mr. Dawson, which supplements your unanswerable presentation," exclaimed my friend Dr. Meredith, who happened to be a guest. "As a physician I find myself in my more thoughtful mo-

ments confronted with a disturbing doubt. Perhaps those of you not in close touch with my profession are unaware of the progress made by modern medicine in the arrest of zymotic disease—the prevention of the spread of fevers, small-pox, and kindred ailments traceable to rapidly multiplying and pernicious organisms. As a consequence, human life has been appreciably lengthened; thereby increasing the number of the infirm and aged. In prolonging existence at the expense of plagues and epidemics, are we not necessarily playing into the hands of arterial degeneration, cancer, and the other progressive ills which prey upon decrepitude and longevity? Statistics cannot fail to demonstrate this. Nor are we merely protecting healthy persons from germs in order that they may live longer; we are doing our best in the name of enlightened philanthropic medicine to keep alive those constitutionally incapacitated for the struggle of life—the insane, the epileptic, the feeble-minded, and the criminally shiftless. Soft-hearted democracy exalts the right of the maimed individual to continue to live—and to live in comfort; and



though we segregate him and sometimes limit his or her power of reproduction, we keep the breath in his body as long as possible. So sacred a thing is tainted human existence, that the modern tendency is to incarcerate the murderer in preference to electrocuting him; and yet, quaintly enough, our American democracy makes light of the annual toll of healthy lives levied by the revolver, the railroad, and the automobile, the total of which far surpasses that of any nation under the sun. But whether the thought which sometimes haunts me—that democracy in its zeal to remedy certain evils is verging on medico-philanthropic hysteria—be well-founded or not, the conclusion is inevitable that the current attitude of society tends to swell largely the army of those to be reckoned with under any system of pensions based on needy old age.”

I was about to respond, but Josephine anticipated me. “Surely,” she said, “few would seek State aid who could possibly avoid it. The stipend fixed would be exceedingly small—a bare living emolument—and decent self-respect would

limit the applicants mainly to the dregs of society and the genuinely unfortunate."

Both capital and science laughed simultaneously, evidently regarding this statement as naïve.

"My diagnosis," said the physician, "is that thousands upon thousands would shape their lives to take advantage of it—obtain something for nothing. It would remove the chief incentive for saving and help to paralyze human ambition."

"Our national experience with the Civil War pension list scarcely leads to your opinion, my dear lady," said Mr. Dawson; and capital followed up this painful reminder by inquiring, "What security have we that the stipend would remain exceedingly small? Is it not reasonable to assume that the terms of such an easy method of subsistence would presently be made more attractive?"

"Now I for one don't think so meanly of human nature." Again it was a woman who ventured to controvert such authority—no other than our mutual friend Mrs. Mabel Flanders

Foote. "Nor can I believe that your panicky predictions of economic disaster are justified. Is the old-age pension anything more than a decent, twentieth-century substitute for the almshouse?"

"Precisely this and nothing else," I asserted, feeling that inasmuch as Mr. Dawson's initial speech had been addressed to me, it was time to take part in the controversy. And yet it was by no means clear why our host had singled me out as likely to defend this special form of socialism. We had been talking of nothing more agrarian or obnoxious than the remote prospect of free municipal theatres as a sequel to free hospitals, free libraries, free band concerts, and free art museums. I regretted the absence of my radical daughter-in-law and her still more radical brother, Luther Hubbard, who would have been able to take up the cudgels with authority; whereas, in justice to my own scruples, it was necessary to qualify my bold beginning by explanation.

"Let me say, however, by way of preface," I proceeded, "that firmly as I believe some pecuniary provision should be made for those who

have outlived their usefulness as subordinates, I believe even more firmly that, wherever possible, a portion of any such fund should be supplied by automatic contribution on the part of those to be benefited—clerks, school-teachers, mill hands, or whoever they may be.”

“Now you talk like a sane man,” said Mr. Dawson, which, considering I had been silent hitherto, savored of aggression. Nevertheless, I accepted the encomium as a compliment, seeing that it served to set me straight in the estimation of my two sons-in-law, Jim Perkins, the architect, and Harold Bruce, the Congressman and man of affairs, both of whom had been staring at me with eyes which suggested that they were wondering how much of a lunatic I was capable of becoming under the spur of obstinate controversial loquacity.

“We—I mean the great world of business,” continued Mr. Dawson, “admit the desirability from several points of view of establishing a system of pensions for superannuated employees in every large enterprise. Initiated and subsidized by the employer, if you choose, but main-

tained in part at least through regular contribution by each individual of a portion of his salary as a condition of future benefit. Under such a system of give and take the portion which the employer or corporation voluntarily sets aside from its profits for this purpose is never begrudged whether it be regarded as a humane gratuity or a sensible business expense. For by this mutual arrangement the worn-out subordinate is enabled to retire gracefully and the employer saved the choice between keeping on his pay-roll men no longer efficient and cutting off their livelihood. But alike in the interest of world political economy, justice, and proper human dignity, the first requisite is that those chiefly to be benefited should bear a suitable share of the burden."

The expansiveness of Mr. Dawson's concluding words intimated that he had conceded all any reasonable philanthropist should ask and had at the same time defined a theory of conduct which should by its sheer equability keep even lunatics at bay.

- "Your system covers the ground admirably

so far as it goes," I answered. "But let me put you a question. Suppose, for example, that I, who am now a reasonably respected grandfather, had started life with no revenue but my own strong arms—emigrated as a young man to this country. We will grant me honest, but uneducated and not over intelligent, and so unlikely to rise higher than my associates. Suppose that instead of prospering as many do, I had been followed by hard luck through no fault of my own. Hard luck is not solely due to drink and idleness, as the well-to-do are apt to insinuate with some complacency. I obtain municipal employment as a day laborer. The work is well suited to my capacities, and I buckle down to it with the vigor of youth. The vigor of youth prompts me also to marry, and the girl of my class who accepts me is content to live on the two dollars a day which I earn—rather fat pay in our estimation. I keep sober and steady, but the inevitable happens—a baby is born. As we live in close quarters and the church to which we belong favors large families, you can scarcely blame us that we find ourselves before we know

it the parents of several children; one of whom is sickly. But we manage well enough until my wife develops out of a clear sky symptoms of tuberculosis. The doctors are hopeful and generous; the neighbors kind; and she is sent by charitable visitors to a cure for consumptives. But the loss of the woman of the house entails expense which keeps a day laborer at his wit's end to avoid debt. She comes back after a number of months cured—but she is never strong. We struggle along, and, though we have our ups and downs, I manage to keep my head above water. Now and again, owing to bad times or politics, I lose my job; but my strong sinews and my reputation for steadiness save me from remaining idle long. The years slip away and—to prolong my hypothetical case sufficiently to introduce the climax—I am still hale at sixty-five, when I hear some fine morning from the foreman, 'Sorry, but you're through. The boss says he must have a younger man.' I've half realized I was not so strong as I once was, but this strikes me all of a heap. I've been honest and temperate, but honesty and temperance won't restore the van-



ished strength to my back and arms. The truth dawns on me—I'm worn-out, and if I were a horse or a dog, they'd knock me on the head or chloroform me. Being a human being who has reared a family and done the best he could under the circumstances, I've got to choose between living on charity or go to an institution as a penalty for not having saved from my abundant means enough to support me in my old age."

As I paused there was silence. I could see Mr. Dawson frown. But, oddly enough, it was Josephine who reinforced him with the artless speech, uttered as though in reverie: "Yet every now and then one hears wonderful tales of how a workingman has brought up a large family, sending his sons to college and fitting his daughters to be trained nurses or opera singers, on some such paltry wages. Presumably they must be true—but it's a mystery how they manage."

"Yet they do manage somehow," resumed my antagonist. "'Thrift, thrift, Horatio.' And when they're superannuated they smoke their pipes at their children's firesides and do odd jobs about the premises for their board. The hy-

pothetical case you instance was a municipal employee who in this country receives at least two dollars daily—fat pay according to his own statement. If I correctly distinguish the object of your pathetic narrative, it was to demonstrate that twelve dollars per week cannot bear the strain of automatic contribution.”

“I am certainly suspicious of the inexorability of a system which insists that one in such circumstances should bear what you term his share of the burden,” I answered.

“Is it your desire then to pension every city laborer? If so, why, pray, are his circumstances more deserving than those of the employee of the private contractor who receives from twenty-five to fifty cents a day less?”

“Or why is a day laborer more deserving than the worker in any other class?” broke in my architect son-in-law, Josie’s husband. “I rather think the average small man of almost any occupation—the fellow who hasn’t been successful and has rusted out—shopkeeper, mechanic, or professional man, has quite as hard a time at the fag end of life as the day laborer.”

I flashed a glance of gratitude at the last speaker, though I recognized his words as an offshoot of dissent. At the same moment I heard Josephine say under the influence of what appeared to me almost second sight (an occasional miraculous way she has of anticipating and summarizing my deductions):

"Perhaps it's the unsuccessful man of every sort—the one who has rusted out—whom grandpa has in mind." Then turning to me she added: "I wasn't aware, Fred, that you were an advocate of old-age pensions."

"I have never proclaimed myself as one. It was Mr. Dawson who took my advocacy for granted," I replied guardedly. "At the same time (for I can't answer every one at once), why is there greater economic iniquity in pensioning the day laborer than in providing pensions for our judges, policemen, firemen, and school-teachers? The tendency is to permit all these public servants to retire at a certain age after a lengthy term of service and not to require automatic contribution from their salaries during employment. Oh, yes, I know the familiar

arguments in support of the distinction and the exemption. The fireman, like the war veteran, risks his life; the policeman protects the public property; the judge maintains the conscience and dignity of the State; the school-teacher moulds the intelligence of the precious future generations. Their several callings are ordinarily inconsistent with much saving. Society can afford the extra expenditure as an inducement to efficient men and women to grow old in these employments, and the pension awarded them represents a blending of attenuated gratitude and civic humanitarianism."

"Compare the insufficient salaries paid our American judiciary, excepting those of the State of New York, with the lordly provision made in England," commented Mr. Dawson. "It is niggardly for one of the wealthiest nations in the world to pay, for instance, a Federal judge, who has the power to dissolve huge corporations, only six thousand dollars a year for his services."

"Yet," I replied, "the moment you give him ten or twelve his ability to contribute automatically from his salary toward his own pension in-

creases. And at six thousand, although he is expected to present a neat front to the world, his ability to contribute is far greater than that of the day laborer. I agree that democracy is inclined to be niggardly in recompensing its useful public servants; but please remember at the same time that in exempting certain callings from the self-respecting burden of contribution we are showing favoritism. If we choose to justify the discrimination on the ground that the pension is partly by way of reward for service to society—analogous to the largesse which a nation bestows on a victorious captain—well and good; but there's no logic in it. If the pension is to be a premium on success and respectability to the exclusion of the under dog, we further exemplify the saying that unto him who hath shall be given and from him who hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

My friend Dr. Meredith does not conceal his impatience when convinced that the other man is talking nonsense, and the instant I paused he rebuked me with "A premium on success? My dear sir, ever since the world began the rewards

of human society have been based on some kind of success, and must be until the end of time. It's a law both of nature and of human morals that the prizes of life should fall to those who help the world along whether by genius and exceptional gifts or by honesty, thrift, and sobriety, rather than to those who retard its progress by sloth, inefficiency, intemperance, and all the proclivities of vice. It is sentimentality not to recognize that a considerable proportion of the population of the globe is congenitally lazy, congenitally defective, congenitally criminal, and congenitally shiftless. Which of the greatest nations has not risen to power by abetting the laws of nature—rewarding and advancing those best qualified to serve her? Democracy may see fit to equalize or redistribute the rewards, but she cannot hope to run counter to processes which are as old as the evil which is in man."

"And in woman," murmured Josephine. "Why is it that the older one grows, the more perplexing the world becomes? I used to imagine that a grandmother, when not happy in the present, would be fondly dreaming of the

past. But thanks to Fred's insatiate appetite for new problems, I am kept constantly harrowed by discussing what ought to be and peering into the future."

"Because your husband is an incorrigible radical under the guise of an innocent philosopher," ventured Mr. Dawson.

"And on this special subject purblind to the influence of certain innate immutable tendencies," proclaimed Dr. Meredith. "If I understand him correctly, he would pension the enemies of society at the expense of those who have benefited it."

"Hear, hear!" cried our host defiantly. But it was some comfort to me that my two sons-in-law refrained from swelling the note of hostility and seemed waiting for the completion of my argument. Having been forced into the discussion, I felt a little like one whose back is against a wall. There was no alternative but to capitulate or defend myself. And yet I was fighting Luther Hubbard's battle rather than my own. No wonder Josephine was surprised to hear that I favored old-age pensions, for, to tell



the truth, until attacked I had been but dimly aware of it. Yet now the reply flowed from my lips with all the fervor of belief:

“Why does not he who has made a miserable failure of life stand more in need of assistance in his latter days than the man who has prospered? You approach the subject from the point of view of what a human being has deserved—and you steel your hearts and fortify your bank accounts with the complacent creed that it is every man’s fault if he is poverty-stricken in his old age. You lay the entire blame on his shortcomings—the catalogue of which you have just graphically set forth—and maintain that the only claim which he has on the community is that of the mendicant. If he cries ‘peccavi!’ you are prepared to relieve his urgent necessities in the name of charity which warms the cockles of your heart. For a long time you sent him to the almshouse, pointing to it with pride. That outpost of philanthropic mercy has been superseded by the soup kitchen, the charitable society, the social visitor, and the various institutions for the care of the defective.”

"Involving an enormous cost, levied by taxation on the prosperous and thrifty," Mr. Dawson succeeded in interjecting; which gave an opportunity to his ally to inquire ironically, "And while you are about it, why not provide a stipend for the criminal? Then the logic of the situation would be flawless."

Thus goaded, I retorted: "Yet I am confident that the time is coming and is not far off when society will be ashamed that it ever approached the question of relief for the impecunious aged from any other point of view except their dire necessities. When you conjure up the old-age pension list you behold a long line which stretches out to the crack of doom—millions of lazy, shiftless mortals reaching out their dirty palms for the pittance which the State provides after they have become unfitted to labor. Your frenzied imagination depicts human ambition palsied, filial love atrophied, and the pittance swollen by the greed of the multitude to a ruinous allowance for everybody, the inevitable sequence of which will be universal bankruptcy. The difficulty is that you underestimate both the dignity

of human nature and its common-sense. I am unable to foresee the likelihood of any such carnival of extravagance as the result of relieving the individual superannuated in the struggle of life from the reproach of mendicancy. I see in it the working of a more enlightened sense of justice, which refuses longer to lay almost hysterical stress on the frailties of human nature as the underlying cause of human lack of success, but weighs in the same scale with these the other contributing factors, some congenital, some due to opportunity and chance, which contribute to the production of the man who has rusted out. It means the growing recognition that henceforth sheer failure under our economic system is not to be regarded as a crime, the punishment for which is starvation or an almshouse, without regard to extenuating circumstances for which the system itself is partly responsible. The case I cited was an average one; average in that it presented no larger element of fault in the victim than that of thousands; and the mistake you gentlemen make is in assuming that a modest provision by the State in lieu of the work-house

for those incapacitated by age or infirmity for the labor or employment in which they have grown feeble, will tempt humanity in the gross to throw economy to the winds and wallow in idleness. As Mrs. Foote says, I have not such a mean opinion of human nature, despite our disreputable Civil War pension statistics. Nor," I added with a glance at Dr. Meredith, "shall we be any less likely to keep our criminals under lock and key because society affords to the worn-out veteran of a life of travail or even of inefficiency the bare means of subsistence."

## X

MY friend Dr. Meredith showed what he thought of my involuntary defence of old-age pensions by confiding to my son-in-law, Harold Bruce, as they walked down our host's avenue—but in so loud a whisper that I could not avoid overhearing:

“I fear the old gentleman is breaking up. I have known various cases like this—men of sound and discriminating judgment, who have suddenly become susceptible to every sentimental whimwham of an irresponsible age. It's a well recognized form of mental degeneracy.”

“He may be losing his grip a little,” assented my son-in-law, for whose reply I deliberately listened, “but that political doctrine is in the air; and a man who like myself has to speak in public must be familiar with both sides of the question, if only to be able to warn people intelligently of its dangers.”

This was almost exoneration from the charge

of lunacy, and let me down gracefully. For if a man of my years can get a fairly favorable verdict from his family on that score, when he is supposed to be out of ear-shot, he need not fear the judgment of the rest of the world.

It would have been easy to take umbrage at Dr. Meredith's insinuation and thus imperil our long intimacy. He is two years my senior and, apart from his distinguished attainments as a physician, cherishes what I regard as pessimistic opinions. He surveys the present by the light of the past and is constantly making invidious comparisons which reflect on current conditions and theories. You will recall how set he was in his belief in the degeneracy of the rising generation because of its ignorance of the classics, the Bible, and Shakespeare. An old-fashioned disciplinarian himself as well as scholar, he is only too ready to distrust and anathematize any panacea which militates against his pious inherited conviction, fortified by personal observation, that the poverty, misery, and lack of success of the multitude are mainly due to their own shortcomings. He would tell you that human

nature in the gross is essentially evil, and that in order to distinguish the sheep from the goats and keep the latter from multiplying unduly, we can not afford to dispense with any of the stringent safeguards by means of which society has hitherto kept its vicious and degraded members at bay. If he could have his individual way, he would sterilize by law the criminal and the shiftless. Why, if we exert ourselves to destroy the noxious germs in milk by chemical treatment, to improve the breed of animals, and enhance the quality of fruit and vegetables (I can hear him say), should we be so mealy-mouthed and sentimental in dealing with degraded human nature?

Dr. Meredith is what might be termed a Calvinist of human science. There is no exertion or sacrifice he would not make to assist the economically elect, but, when it comes to the rank and file of comparative outcasts, he steels his heart and satisfies his intelligence by the formula that whatever has been must be, and devotes his energies to the improvement of our penitentiaries, mad-houses, soup kitchens, and hospitals to the exclusion of any form of relief



which involves a change in economic preconceptions.

On such a man the perusal of this extract, which a great uncle of mine of the same name transcribed from the prison records of Newgate in proof of what he himself witnessed in London in 1788, little more than a hundred years ago, ought to have the effect of the worst jolt which a modern taxicab can inflict on the human system relaxed, though doubtless the economic Calvinists of the period saw nothing monstrous in the spectacle: "Phoebe Morris was barbariously (*sic*) executed, and burned before Newgate for coining. A well-made woman of thirty, of pale complexion and not disagreeable features. When she came out of prison she trembled greatly at the appearance of the stake, which was fixed half-way between the scaffold and Newgate Street. She was then tied by the neck to an iron bolt fixed near the top of the stake, and after praying fervently for a few minutes, the steps on which she stood were withdrawn and she was left suspended. A chain fastened by nails to the stake was then put round her body, two cart-

loads of fagots were piled round her, and after she had hung for half an hour the fire was kindled. The body hung by the iron chains, and the fire had not quite burned out by noon; in nearly twenty-four hours, that is to say. A great concourse of people attended on this melancholy occasion."

Were I to call this episode to Dr. Meredith's attention by way of demonstrating how rapidly the point of view of posterity has altered, it would be just like him to reply after a moment of appalled silence: "We have gone to the other extreme in our day. I wouldn't have any one burned in chains; but more than half the murderers who ought to be executed escape either through sentimentality or technicalities of legal evidence."

And the difficulty is that I could not deny the truth of the impeachment. Moreover, my sympathies would be with him on this particular point, in spite of my admitted compassion for human derelicts.

But the tendency of philanthropic legislation seems to suggest that we may both soon be in

the minority in our conviction that the criminal who takes the life of another human being with malice aforethought should be electrocuted with all possible despatch rather than incarcerated at the cost of State. There is reason to fear that humanity's ethical instincts have been so completely swept away from their ancient moorings by the swelling tide of the brotherhood of man that the penalty of a life for a life will presently appear only a little less barbarous than the horror chronicled by my ancestor.

It is just here that I find in the lurking suspicion that he may not have been altogether wrong regarding my mental condition the true cause why I failed to take offence at Dr. Meredith's indignity. While I stoutly insist that, if I am breaking up, so is he, certain very live doubts akin to my belief in capital punishment lead me to wonder whether a maudlin tendency to palliate original sin may not be an even more insidious sign of advanced mental decay than fossilized faith in the past or whispering so loud that every one can hear. It is to be remembered that I was goaded into advocacy of old-age pen-

sions. Consequently, while I still cling to my opinion, I am not deaf to the plausibility of the argument that these doubts which harass me are the product of lucid intervals in an otherwise senile train of thought. I prefer, of course, to believe the converse true, and that the doubts are mere symptoms of failing vigor in a sanely progressive outlook. But be this as it may, they claim the right to discredit, if they can, the modern philanthropic programme.

Consider, for instance, the issue cited by Dr. Meredith, the growing prejudice against capital punishment, which in certain communities has culminated in its abolition. Is it not a flagrant case of putting the cart before the horse to hold sacred the life of the brutal murderer before taking the requisite steps to protect the reputable citizen from a variety of deadly perils due to easy-going democratic indifference to homicide? Is it not an anomaly that as a nation we should be suffering qualms at the execution of criminals and yet taking no effective measures against the annual harvest of death from railroad accidents, the automobile, the ubiquitous pistol, and

other perils by which hurrying and law-violating America constitutes a single human life one of the cheapest commodities in the market? Even my opponents in argument were shocked by the reminder that the burning of a colored woman in chains had the sanction of English law at a later date than our Declaration of Independence. Yet who is unaware that to tie a negro to a tree and roast him to death without opportunity for a trial receives the tacit approval of one section of what our native glorifiers are fond of describing as God's people, and is no uncommon spectacle?

A progressive, optimistic grandfather suspected of harboring the delusion that the democratic mass will aspire in proportion to its opportunities must certainly face the charge that ours is an age of mob judgment which supplies condonation for whatever suits the public fancy. "Any one would do the same in our place, and so it's right; it's got to be right" threatens to become the rule of thumb hysterical motto of conduct. Summary vengeance has latterly become the fashion because the public

chooses not to be "too hard" on the offender who takes the law into his own hands under circumstances which excite its sympathies. Nearly every one reserves the right to break the law which happens not to suit him or her. It is only the open menace of public disgrace coupled with imprisonment which prevents constant unblushing violation of our custom regulations by men and women who claim to be our social leaders. Is it surprising that the chauffeur clad in a little brief authority should, in imitation of the returning traveller who says "I've a right to bring in my own wardrobe free of duty, and I will if I can," revolt at being required to slow down when a pedestrian blocks the crossing? We are asked to take notice that engines tearing through our streets have "come to stay," that the man who desires to live must recognize this and keep out of the road, and are reminded that the citizen who is run over by a vehicle in Paris has to pay the damages."

In consequence of the national craving to be carried from one destination to another as rapidly as possible, coupled with the fear of losing

time if additional safeguards be required, we remain comparatively callous to the death of our neighbor if we escape. The easy-going democratic tendency to take chances and not to fix the responsibility for catastrophes finds an ally in the popular disposition to "let up" on an offender after the first outburst of indignation on the plea that he may "lose his job." This pathetic but hideous phrase serves constantly as a screen for the negligent and guilty and serves to lower the standard of efficiency.

So hysterical is our concern for the living at the expense of the dead that it is notorious how speedily we forget the silent sufferings of those bereaved and left destitute through murder or homicide in our eagerness to find some loop-hole of escape for the accused. Compared with the rejoicing of the multitude over one murderer saved from the electric chair, the sympathy for the random ninety and nine victims is apt to be a tepid emotion. For the first few days following an exceptionally picturesque taking of life the public heart throbs with avenging compassion for the slain and his family. In its eagerness



to detect or run down the assassin, the community, through its hired agents, the reporters, endeavors on each new occasion to reinterpret the word indelicacy. Nothing is too sacred for its feverish probings. It violates the privacy of the afflicted in order to lay bare their sufferings, adding by means of the camera a fresh pang to human grief. And we are all familiar with the plausible but disingenuous plea by which a congratulatory press defends itself and patrons from the charges of sickening, morbid curiosity. How often after a lurid inquisitional campaign are we invited on the editorial page to contemplate the efficacy of the modern newspaper (and this one in particular) in unearthing the important evidences of crime! Once proclaimed as the henchman of the white-robed goddess Justice, it is easy to maintain that private sensibilities must not impede the searchlight of the myriad-eyed modern detective; though no one knows better than any editor that nine-tenths of the harrowing details printed pander to the appetite of the mass for fresh horrors.

But very shortly the emphasis changes. The

victim and his household no longer occupy the centre of the stage, which is now held by the accused. The dead man is safely buried, and, unless exhumed by the district attorney, is of no more use as copy. His unhappy family, prostrate from suffering and publicity, are permitted to sink into obscurity, fortunate if they have escaped insult or recrimination. The accused, lately condemned on every side as the assassin, has become suddenly almost a hero, and an object of envy to a considerable constituency in humdrum circumstances who, through scruples or lack of temperament, have never attained notoriety.

The fortunes of a successful brigand or highwayman at large of the olden days were perilous compared with those of the contemporary murderer after indictment. Though supposed to bear a charmed life, the brigand or highwayman was tolerably certain to be shot or hanged sooner or later; whereas no one has a surer prospect of dying in his own bed than he who commits a picturesque or popular contemporary murder. How can it be otherwise while society remains so

squeamishly afraid of appearing "too hard" on any one that it connives at the elimination from the panel of all jurors whose intelligence or moral sense would fit them to serve? It is notorious that the dearest and but thinly concealed hope of counsel for the defence is to obtain a disagreement by working on the sympathies of perverted or ignorant natures. Is it strange that picturesqueness should associate itself in the popular imagination with the career of one who, notwithstanding wide-spread secret belief in his guilt, succeeds in thwarting justice by disagreements, long delays, innumerable exceptions to the admission of evidence, the success of any one of which may involve a new trial and flimsy appeals to the Supreme Court of the United States? Indeed, it would be odd if the easy-going rank and file did not class him with the other successful men of the day who have thrust their heads above their fellows into the "lime-light"—trust magnates, aviators, Pole discoverers, and the like—and think of him after a decent lapse of time as "under a cloud," but pretty nearly a national hero.

If indeed we who seek to promote the brotherhood of man claim that a more sensitive spirit of mercy and the desire to do more exact justice are at the root of democracy's leniency toward law-breakers, rather than the blunted moral sense which suggests itself, we certainly cannot ignore American democracy's lack of sensitiveness in other relations. A grandfather, who sums up impartially the changes which have taken place since he was young, must include sundry manifestations which people half a century ago were accustomed to associate with a lack of delicate feelings. The attitude of much of our democracy to-day is so rampantly optimistic that its favorite phrase, "I feel good," is typical no less of its general self-satisfaction than of its superiority to grammar. The noble hope which our Republic—and indeed all democracies—holds out to every individual of being able to make the most of himself or herself seems strangely coupled in the ordinary mind with emancipation from many of the ancient courtesies or niceties of life.

In the closely packed, ill-ventilated cattle

pens which the free-born American tolerates as a conveyance in every city and its suburbs—preferring the agony of hanging to a strap to a moment's delay—is not the prevailing sentiment a purpose to obtain a seat by superior struggling and keep it? The excuses are plausible enough: the tired man needs rest and wishes to read his newspaper; the recipient is so rarely grateful; whoever is nearest the door is sure to rise for a cripple or tottering octogenarian; and one of the “rights” of the modern woman is to stand. But the impression left on the unprejudiced observer is that the idea of “making good” in every competition so completely possesses the average young American that renunciation of anything won by agility or force seems almost quixotic, unless the beneficiary be an elderly acquaintance, a pretty girl, or some one on crutches. The rows of able-bodied youths who hold the best seats in every public conveyance would suggest the doubt whether mothers still continue to impress upon their offspring that amiable self-sacrifice and deference to seniority are virtues which no triumphant democracy can afford to discard.

Yet the day-dreams of many of these same scorners of politeness unquestionably include the risk of life for a drowning child or fidelity at his post in the hour of danger.

Altruistic as we believe ourselves in our large social conceptions, there are many signs that the tacit American motto in small things is "the devil take the hindmost." The old-fashioned theory that a gentleman will not grab the best seems a far-fetched and unbusiness-like neglect of opportunity to many who despise what they term aristocratic "frills." We laugh at and ascribe to Semitic sources the oft-quoted reply of the diner who complained that his companion had left him the smaller duck. "You in my place would have chosen the smaller? Vell, you've got what you wanted; what you kicking at?" But we detect with relish therein a certain discriminating logic symbolical of the times. There is reason to believe that many of the miscreants who despoil gardens of their flowers and orchards of their fruit would have serious compunctions at stealing a purse, and deem the appropriation of these tempting trifles as the mere

justifiable exercise of a democratic prerogative concerning anything which is ripe. "The owner ought to have been quicker;" and, provided they are not caught (or sometimes even if they are), they can feel sure that this humorously practical view of the situation will make the offence seem trivial to a considerable portion of the community. But (I can hear Hugh Armitt Dawson inquire), if democratic self-complacency can thus temper the Eighth Commandment, why might it not easily breed a frame of mind which would discover in the old-age pension a tempting stimulus to premature inertia?

Perhaps the most signal change in our sensibilities is the growth of the appetite for publicity, a more or less world-wide by-product of the brotherhood of man, and partly due to much ampler advertising facilities and means of quick communication, but nowhere more conspicuous than in our native civilization. To be sure its seed is the noble human craving for glory. But so strangely streaked has the original pure flower become by successive graftings induced by a confused sense of values, that renown in



the popular mind to-day is largely synonymous with the ability to attract attention. Indeed, so prolific is the contemporary hot-house horticulture of greatness, that at the mention of a familiar name one often is at a loss to remember whether it represents distinguished service or monumental chicanery. Though it might be thought cynical to assert that the first requisite in any field of human endeavor is a capable press agent, few will deny that the once prized and graceful flower, individual privacy, appears old-fashioned to the younger generation.

That none but essentially vulgar people would court publicity regarding private entertainments used to be taken for granted, and would be still if it were not for the testimony of any editor whom one chooses to consult that a considerable portion of the information concerning social affairs set forth in the newspapers is volunteered by those who figure in them. Do you know the Wilmot Browns? If so, you will recognize them as an agreeable family with fashionable proclivities, but not exceptional in any way. Yet their rather unimportant doings are con-

stantly heralded in the press; made at times the subject of a special despatch. I long ago grew weary of reading of their comings and goings, but have steadily refrained from harboring the suspicion that they connive at the publicity. Yet it was a staggering blow to me to hear one of my granddaughters say the other day that she envied the Wilmot Browns and would like to be equally conspicuous if she could. I found on questioning her that she looked on this ability to figure persistently in the public eye as a sign of real celebrity and regarded the means by which this was accomplished—direct communication with the press, polite attentions to a female society reporter, or complete particulars supplied by a discreet butler—as a mere secondary matter of detail.

The discovery of this covetous point of view—a sort of worm-in-the-bud feeding on the damask cheek of one of my most intelligent granddaughters (whose name I will not disclose lest she change her opinion later), has served to open my eyes to the true importance of her cousin Dorothy Perkins, to whom I have occasionally re-

ferred in these pages, and who so conducts herself that nearly everything she does gets into the newspapers. Shocking as it may sound to those who regard maidenly decorum as essential to the evolution of a fine woman, she is already virtually a public character. I used to think that this must be mortifying or at least distasteful to her. But I have gradually come to the conclusion that she not merely likes, but dotes upon it, and regards (with the acquiescence of her contemporaries) the notoriety as a sign that she is "making good" according to the standards of the day.

No one can have kept track of my various convictions without coming to the conclusion that strait-laced reactionary is the last term which could be applied to me, and I have already indicated that the world has no patience with a peevish grandfather. It would, therefore, seem fruitless to cling to one's preconceptions of delicacy in the face of the new interpretation of an auto-intoxicated democracy. Though it used to be the fashion to let the office seek the man, even the most visionary idealist to-day should

be satisfied if an aspirant for any vacancy awaits the interment of the deceased before announcing his candidacy and "placing himself in the hands of his friends." It costs so much to live that no self-respecting man can afford to run the risk of not being thought of. But when it comes to feminine sensibilities, especially those of the budding woman with whom our dearest hopes for the race are tenderly associated——

At this precise point I was suddenly cut off by Josephine, who had been following my strictures closely without dissent.

"In the matter of cigarettes, Fred, you are aware how strongly I feel. I do not defend Dorothy; though many women of the highest refinement in foreign countries are addicted to their use. But if only that clergyman who preached against her—and he was seeking notoriety no less than she—had chosen to condemn at the same time the inelegant, unladylike, and disfiguring habit of chewing gum in which the rank and file of American women persistently indulge, he would have been doing better public service. They look so hideously complacent in the process."

It is obvious to me every now and then that Josephine's faith in the approaching brotherhood of man has its reserves, though she sympathized so acutely with John McGillicuddy's inability to recover suitable compensation for the loss of his leg. You will recall that she was chary of enthusiasm when I defended the theory of old-age pensions. Yet firmly convinced as I am that the day of the poor-house is over, I must say that her criticism served to supply me with one more count for the indictment I had just been drawing against the shortcomings of our self-complacent democracy. Perhaps no better example of the dangers of the triumph of democracy over aristocracy is its substitution of highly moral chewing gum for the deleterious cigarette.

## XI

“**W**HY don't you take an automobile trip abroad, grandpapa? It's a cinch.”

The inquirer was my grandson, Frederick Third (though it might have been any one of my grandsons, for they all use the same incisive vernacular), and to demonstrate what he meant he added:

“You engage your car on the other side by cable; it meets you at the steamer, and you're in Russia or Constantinople in no time. Only five pounds a day, and the mechanician, as they call him over there, feeds himself and the car. I'd love to be one of the party, but I've motored on the other side twice, and this summer I've planned to take hydroplane lessons during my vacation. I'll arrange, though, to get you a first-class machine to hold five, if you say the word.”

Far from being the magnate which my namesake's language suggests, he is simply a wide-awake and industrious employee in a banking-

house, plus a thorough working knowledge of the automobile, which entitles him to be listened to whenever the word is mentioned. By way of emphasizing his inability to understand why Josephine and I should remain so singular as not to own one, he informed me plaintively some time ago that any vehicle not propelled by gasoline is an "ice-cart"—a gratuitously invidious reference to the newly varnished buggy in which I continue to take his grandmother to drive. It is correct that he has motored twice in Europe. The first time just after graduation, when, having crossed the ocean as a deck-hand on a cattle-ship, he "blew in" (to preserve his own phraseology) at the Ritz in London the day after landing, and was invited by a millionaire classmate to tour Europe in a high-powered racing machine; and again last summer when, happening to be a little run down, he was given the opportunity to recuperate by accompanying my friend Hugh Armitt Dawson in the very latest model of luxurious limousine. Consequently, though I put him off on the spur of the moment with the counter inquiry, "Why not a trip in a monoplane



to the moon?" I was conscious of pricking up my ears.

It seems only the other day when the limit of the conventional vacation was a fortnight, and absence from one's business for six months, unless because of mortal illness, denoted lack of serious purpose. To amuse one's self deliberately, except on rare occasions, was synonymous with levity. Yet so revolutionary has been the change, that any grandfather must be a Spartan who has not, unconsciously at least, fallen under the spell of the modern craving for recreation. We live to-day under the sceptre of King Hygiene and Queen Nepenthe, whose revels tempt even the most ascetic grandfather to kick up his heels. Now that a Sabbatical year for the professor and the clergyman, constantly renewed moving pictures for the many, and a winter on the Riviera for any one able to shuffle off the fetters of his treadmill have become commonplaces of our civilization, it is difficult to avoid, even if one would, auto-intoxication, as the doctors call it, with the prevalent consciousness that the corner-stone of the science of living

is perpetual variety. Indeed may we not hope, with the aid of new, element-conquering mechanisms, to learn presently the art of perpetual motion, and thus live forever?

Hence I was more or less prepared for the retort which my analogy of a trip to the moon elicited:

"I expect to take it some day, grandpapa. And you may live to see me do it, if you follow my advice this summer."

The next moment I became the target for a quiverful of exhortation.

"You're looking fagged; it would do you lots of good."

"Give the problems a rest. Variety of scene will broaden your horizon."

"Grandmama needs a change as well as you."

"If you should decide to go and can take Winona, it would do her a world of good. Three cases of scarlet fever in the house are a strain on any woman."

"As the car holds five, I wonder if there would be room for Dorothy Perkins. To cover so much

ground in so short a time would be immensely stimulating for the dear child."

"If you need another man—some one to act as a buffer between responsibility and grandpapa—I dare say Harold could get away for a portion of the time and occupy the seat beside the chauffeur."

As if this were not disconcerting enough, Josephine capped these proddings of the conspirators with the pathetic words:

"We haven't been abroad, Fred, for nearly five years. I think it would be a perfect experience." And she added: "I've set my heart this time on seeing the English cathedrals."

When Josephine sets her heart on anything, experience has taught me to prepare for the inevitable. I will do her the justice to state that this stand on her part is infrequent and is associated principally in my mind with travel for the purpose of seeing cathedrals—travel I must confess at rather wide intervals. Comparatively early in our married life she set her heart on seeing the French cathedrals. Some years after our return, when I had fully recovered my

normal animal spirits, she gave me to understand that she yearned to see the Italian cathedrals. Now it was obvious that she would never be completely happy until she should gaze upon the English.

There is a certain domestic advantage to be gained by throwing upon others the onus of any undertaking to which one is ready to submit.

"Freddy," I exclaimed, addressing my grandson, "I authorize you to engage a suitable machine. Grandmama has taken the bit of travel between her teeth."

Thus it happened that some two months later I found myself gliding along the Knightsbridge road, the pseudo owner of a capacious touring car, the other occupants of which besides my wife were my daughter Winona and my grandchildren Dorothy and Harold. We were headed for a cathedral—which one I scarcely knew nor cared, seeing that I was already basking in the warmth of the conviction that an automobile is a vast improvement on a carry-all, and that I had been "a bit" hasty in dismissing as a truism my friend Gillespie Gore's favorite epigram that

the automobile has annihilated time and distance.

While listening with proper awe to his enlargement on this theme I have been disposed to fancy that if this genial and well-read gentleman is not so brisk as formerly, it is because of the cherished belief that motoring is exercise. He used to be an ardent pedestrian; now he never walks at all; and I have not a shadow of doubt that the increasing corpulence of one of my sons-in-law, who was once an ambitious golfer, is directly traceable to his reluctance to move except in his automobile. It has been my self-righteous tendency, as I trudged along on foot, nimbly dodging the swiftly passing machines of my friends, to be grateful that, having ridden in horse-cars not so very long ago, Josephine and I were not dependent on constant velocity. Yet here I was within the first ten minutes almost ready to recant, or at least to barter green old age for a moving picture show of endless variety.

How promptly, too, as I sped through the lovely English landscape, did I range myself—

unconsciously yet firmly—on the side of injured innocence. At home I have been a sedulous supporter of the society to incarcerate careless automobilists. Yet when I learned from our driver that the uniformed scouts, who from time to time gave him a military salute from the highway, were emissaries hired to indicate that the “peeler” of the neighborhood was at the other end of his beat and the road clear, I beheld the speed indicator quicken (for I do not allow Harold to appropriate the front seat the entire time) with a sense of elation. Was not our chauffeur the most careful as well as the most expert of drivers? There was scarcely a nook or cranny of the United Kingdom which he had not explored—with princes, dukes, or candidates for Parliament as his employers. Indeed, so intoxicating were my sensations that I felt I might be easily mistaken for our mutual friend Hugh Armitt Dawson—an American millionaire disguised by a linen dust coat.

It was the passing of a flock of motor cyclists—close to a hundred from the numbers on their backs—tearing by us at a furious pace in a cloud

of dust, followed by laggards until the noisy procession seemed to have no end, which prompted the reminiscent philosopher within me to expatiate on the doubtful triumph of gasoline over the poetry of motion displayed by the sylph-like Josephine when she rode on her bicycle not so very long ago in search of the cathedrals and chateaux of sunny France. Then all the world was on the wheel—a horrid irk nowadays, my grandchildren inform me—and relegated to the impecunious or humdrum. These motor bicyclists were trying out their engines—a rude object-lesson in the survival of the fittest—not racing, and the machines which stood the test would be exposed for sale and desecrate with their noise and smell the highways of old England.

But Josephine on her wheel was a pleasure to the eye, and lulled to rest every other sense. I can see her now gracefully erect, flying, not “scorching,” along the perfect roads of Normandy and Touraine, indifferent to hill mounting and almost scornful of the ever-recurring “*descente dangereuse*” by which the sign-post of the Touring Club of France foretold the gentlest incline.



To ride with a bundle on one's handle bars was still a novelty and regarded with suspicion both by pedestrians and those who travelled by train. Is it possible to journey so fast and remember what you see? So asked the wiseacres then; and if, leaning back in my touring car, a magnate incognito in a linen dust coat, I mentally endorse my grandson's stricture that a bicycle to-day is an "ice-cart," I can at least vouch that our memories still retain that delightful panorama.

Our route, now worn and dusty from the tires of countless automobiles, was still a novelty. Will either of us ever forget the fascinating Norman inn at Dives with its quaint kitchen and white cockatoos perched above the eaves? Or Mont St. Michel, church, fortress, prison, torture chamber, and monastery all in one, where the tide rises and falls with weird rapidity and the gleaming plane of sand invites the imaginative visitor to test if it be true that he will sink to his waist and then out of sight forever; where Madame Poulard, still alive and comely, dispensed her famous omelette to a group of hun-

gry pilgrims not yet become a ravenous horde. Or the monuments of Château land, all of which save one Josephine succeeded in beholding, deploring even to this day that she missed that one? Chinon's ruin which still bade us picture the first meeting of the Maid of Orleans and the King of France. Gloomy, mediæval Loches, fit symbolizer of Louis XI, around the dungeons of which lingers the retributive if doubtful tradition that Cardinal Balue ended his days in the iron cage of which he was the inventor. Stately, artistic Blois, reminiscent of the salamander of Francis I, where one still shudders at the murder of the Duc of Guise in spite of the beauties of the famous outer staircase. It was at the inn at Amboise that we ordered "deux œufs à la coque" and after an interminable delay the proprietress reappeared bearing radiantly in her apron twelve boiled eggs as her interpretation of what "ces Anglais" had demanded for breakfast. Then, by way of graceful Azay le Rideau and Chenonceau, whose five arches span the limpid stream, we came to Chartres, the resplendent glories of whose windows made all the praise

which Josephine had lavished upon other cathedrals seem almost blasphemy. Thence through the shady alleys of the forest of Fontainebleau, one of which brought us to the meeting place of Napoleon and the Pope, whom eight years later he made captive, we bicycled into Paris.

I can see her now—Josephine, I mean—flying along the Champs Elysées, a svelte figure fearlessly winding her way through the afternoon confusion of every variety of vehicle. Why she was not many times a mangled corpse I have never ceased to wonder and did wonder as I followed timorously in her wake. She wore a skirt suitably short and narrow, yet still a skirt, and this to the populace of the day, who doted upon “bloomers” and mistook us for English, was an incentive to satire; impoliteness, so it seemed, from the politest people in the world. “Yes—yes—yes, all right—all right—l’Anglaise,” varied by a prolonged “Oh!” was the method employed to disapprove of us as foreigners. Most emphatic of course on race days, a chorus of these jibes, invariably the same, was apt to accompany us through the Bois and along the

Avenue de la Grand Armée. Yet Josephine rode deftly as any, sitting erect on her wheel. Most of the French women leaned forward on their bars, but not so far as our most inveterate "scorchers." The epidemic of bicycling was at its height and the cafés in the Bois were thronged at certain hours by hundreds of riders, many of whom aimed at striking effects. I can still see one Frenchman at the Chalet des Cycles who wore white shoes, brown stockings with red plaid tops, knickerbockers and a coat of another shade of brown, a pinkish white pink in his bottonhole, a huge red bow tie, white gloves, and a white straw hat with a red-and-black band.

"And the time we went abroad to visit the cathedrals of Italy, first you had your pocket picked, then we lost our trunks," remarked Josephine as I paused in the reminiscences of foreign travel which I was imparting to my grandchildren.

I thought it a little vicious of her, and that it suggested an endeavor to get even with me for my allusion to the dozen eggs. But realizing that the Sherlock Holmes-sharpened wits of the

third generation would probe this sensational disclosure to the core, I concluded that the best hope of a lenient judgment lay in utter frankness.

"Tell us all about it, grandpa," said Harold. But the twinkle in his eye was offset by a wrinkle of the brow which too plainly concealed the insinuation that nothing less was to be expected of an elderly gentleman allowed to wander over Europe without an attendant.

"We were leaving Florence for Venice, Harold. Your grandmother's parcels promised by the haberdasher had not been delivered at the hotel, so my pocket-book was full of Italian *lire* drawn to pay for them. Our porter had deserted us just before the crowded train from Rome came in. While endeavoring to make my way through the corridor car and secure a compartment, I was pushed by a stout German so hard that I dropped involuntarily into a seat. Some instinct caused me to clap my hand on my breast pocket, and I discovered that my pocket-book was gone. It happened to contain, besides the money, our letter of credit, our circular tickets through Italy, the checks for our baggage on the train, and the

receipts for other trunks which had been left in Paris."

"Whew!" ejaculated Harold. "All in one basket and a regular omelette. Worse than the dozen boiled eggs that time."

"What did you do, grandpa? You must have acted like a wet hen," said Dorothy sweetly by way of sympathy.

"I'm afraid I did, dear." I assented with meekness. "My first impulse was to hint that the stout German was the culprit—which caused some unpleasantness; but being bereft of money, I realized the importance of leaving the train before it started; and it would never do to let the thief claim our trunks at Venice if we remained behind. So I tore up and down the platform proclaiming my loss in a mixture of English and French to the Italian officials who volubly expressed polite dismay or shrugged. Having leapt into the baggage car, I was not permitted to handle our trunks, as I was anxious to do; and before any one else displayed energy enough to tumble them out the train was under way."

“With the stout German in possession,” said Harold.

“I’m sure it was the porter,” said Dorothy Perkins.

“As for the trunks on the train,” I continued, “an Italian friend had them put off at the next station. I was immediately conducted before the authorities and invited to select from the entire force of porters who trotted past me in single file the man who had left me in the lurch. He triumphantly exculpated himself by proving an alibi and that his desertion was due to the orders of a superior. I was then carried before a police official who, having carefully taken down the name of my father, who had been dead many years, and the street and number of my house at home, informed me with a tragic air—thereby disposing of the whole occurrence from his standpoint as deplorable but an act of God or the King’s enemies—that there was a gang of thieves operating on the trains between Rome, Florence, and Venice. No less than a hundred other cases, precisely similar to mine, of travellers despoiled of their pocket-books had been recorded by him



during the previous three months. It was epidemic—and he assured me of his profound consideration and distress. Do something? He would gladly do everything in his power. But what could he do? It was fate—unavoidable circumstance.”

“I admire his nerve,” said Harold.

“I hurried from his presence in order to warn the local bankers and telegraph ‘urgente’ to my own in Paris of the loss of my letter of credit, lest the thief avail himself of the facsimile of my signature to forge a draft and draw the balance. Some days later I received word in Venice by leisurely post that in a long experience my bankers knew of no instance where a pick-pocket had attempted this, but that I would probably be legally liable if he succeeded, and that if I felt nervous they would notify all their correspondents at my expense. Your grandmother was ready to take the chance, but I telegraphed them to send out the notices.”

“Yes, and by the end of a week,” broke in Josephine, “they and I were vindicated. The same kind Italian friend who put off our trunks

at the next station, forwarded to us the lost pocket-book with all its contents intact, letter of credit, circular tickets, baggage receipts, and everything—except the money. The miscreant who took it had retained that.”

“He took the cash and let the credit go,” I murmured, but my grandchildren, not recognizing the quotation, regarded me impatiently, suspecting me of an obscure pun.

“How was it found?” they cried simultaneously.

“In a door-way near the station in Florence,” I answered. “A little girl picked it up, and it was handed over to the police who promptly advertised for the owner. Our friend saw the notice and presented my claim.”

“What a very considerate, gentlemanly thief!” remarked Harold. “He could have sold the circular tickets and made a bluff at securing the trunks and the funds in the bank even if he didn’t succeed. Such a chivalric practitioner wouldn’t earn his salt if he came over here.”

“Ready cash was what he was after,” I replied, “and I imagine he didn’t care to be found

with some one's pocket-book in his possession, if he should happen to be caught an hour later plying his trade in a corridor car."

"The experience was annoying," said Josephine, "and got on your grandfather's nerves mainly because he had imagined that no one could pick his pocket without his knowing it. Besides, he was losing most of what he won at Monte Carlo. But it was a bagatelle compared with the loss of our luggage. After those heavenly days in Venice, Fred, I can hear you say, as the train started for Milan, 'the only contretemps which can happen now is to lose our trunks.' And you added: 'I've just seen them labelled with the flimsy bits of paper which pass for checks and are called *scontrini*.' And so it proved, dears. When we arrived in Milan there were no trunks. Every stitch I had with me was in them except the steamer things in Paris. And there we stayed at Milan—your grandfather a full week and I three days, for I had to fly to Paris for the sheer necessities of life—trusting every hour that the trunks would arrive, but warned from the first by compatriots who ought

to know that they had either been stolen or sent to the wrong destination in order that they might be rifled later. Although the railroad officials held out hopes, we heard many whispers that a gang of thieves had control of the baggage cars between Venice and Milan, and that scarcely a week passed but some traveller reported the loss of valuables. Our trunks were so insignificant in number and size that the only explanation why they should have been tampered with was that we had been mistaken for multi-millionaires, who had been buying laces in Venice."

As Mrs. Mabel Flanders Foote might say, "What a very unpleasant confusion of identity," remarked Winona in parenthesis.

"I hope you got busy—and didn't merely fold you hands and lament," said Dorothy Perkins.

"Yes, indeed. Your grandfather was suitably fierce and energetic. Even Harold could have done no more. He sought successively the aid of consuls, the ambassador, the Department of State at Washington. The Italian officials, led to believe that he was a person of importance ransacked Italy from top to bottom and ex-

tended their search beyond the frontier as far as Paris, Vienna, and Berlin. Yet all in vain, and the only remedy was a suit. There is no liability for jewelry under the Italian law, but indemnity may be had for the loss of a traveller's clothing, so our English lawyer informed us; and the first requisite was the filing of a sworn inventory. You should have seen that lawyer's expression when I showed him our list. By good rights the valuation should have been twice what I made it, considering all our mental anguish, but out of deference to your scruples I appraised at only half price all the things which had been used, and at cost only those actually new. He said he believed us implicitly, but that a decision in our favor for any such sum—and it was a comparatively small one—would inevitably be set aside on appeal, for the prices which Americans have to pay their tailors and dress-makers at home would seem incredible to any Italian. The bill was absolutely honest, but the upshot was that after all the strain, including the refusal of the agent who held our steamer trunks in Paris to surrender them because he feared I was

an accomplice of the thief who had stolen our letter of credit, so that I had to be identified by our bankers, who were horribly suspicious also, we received the munificent offer that, in view of your grandfather's excellent reputation for honesty, our sworn statement would be accepted at somewhat less than half its face value. We had returned home by this time, and our lawyer's advice was to agree to the terms, which he regarded as rather brilliant, on the theory that most travellers recover nothing. So we forwarded an acceptance and supposed the matter ended, when suddenly the electrifying cablegram was received 'Luggage found'! And where, do you suppose? At Villach, a town in the Austrian Tyrol just beyond the Italian frontier, one of the places already thoroughly searched. How they got there, why they were sent there, no one seems to know to this day. The paper labels, *scontrini* (shall I ever forget the word?), plainly showed that their destination was Milan. The most plausible theory is that they were side-tracked in order to be claimed after the agitation caused by their disappearance had subsided. But we

made such a rumpus that some one had to find them."

"And what of their contents?" exclaimed Dorothy Perkins feelingly.

"Intact; so far as a wardrobe which is lost in May and not found until December can be said to be intact," answered Josephine. "Fresh complications presented themselves which involved more weeks of waiting. By way of self-protection the Austrian authorities must needs prepare a complete inventory before permitting the trunks to cross the frontier. Then the Italians insisted on another—and here was the bitterest experience of all. The law allows for delay damages of ten per cent on the value of the contents. Little enough, when the fashions change in the interim, if based on the true worth. But despite our sworn appraisal and the testimonials to Fred's character, they appraised everything at such a ridiculously low figure—cutting values more than completely in two—that the sum total on which the percentage was assessed proved so pitifully small that all we recovered after six months of agony was sufficient to pay our lawyer



and the express charges for sending the trunks home. There wasn't a thing missing. But I could weep to think that they were ever found. It was a gruesome experience, and there were moments when I felt that our government ought to send a war-ship. As for cathedrals, I shall never see the spires of the cathedral at Milan without thinking of how atrociously we were robbed."

"Yet we must remember," I added by way of teaching philosophy to my grandchildren, "that I was told at the time by some one of authority and experience that I was the only American traveller who had ever recovered a dollar from the Italian Government, though the loss of pocket-books and the rifling of trunks were every-day incidents."

And I further pointed out as a moral—for so long and harassing an adventure would not be complete without one—that Josephine's and my misfortunes would seem to be fundamentally traceable to Italian misconception of the meaning of the brotherhood of man—that world impulse which has become the guide to all modern social

progress. While the other nations are endeavoring zealously to lessen the inequalities of existence by Old-Age Pensions, Workingmen's Compensation Acts, and kindred humanitarian measures, the Italian political authorities seem to regard adroit thieving from foreigners intent on visiting cathedrals as an industry which should be winked at because it serves to keep contented a certain element of the population which would otherwise be without means of support. There is economic plausibility in this, for a direct tax on the stranger augments the public revenues. Moreover, one must recognize that the officials of a country where a generation ago the bandit was a national figure could not single out the eighth commandment for enforcement without being accused of lack of sympathy with the impecunious masses. Yet may not the visiting foreigner pertinently point out that the brotherhood of man is a world creed, not a local relief measure? And so arguing, justly decline to view either as sincere or humanitarian the helplessness of a police power palsied by the notorious activities of a coterie of pick-pockets opera-

ting between Rome, Florence, and Venice, or unable to protect personal luggage in transit from being rifled or sent astray by those in charge? In these halcyon days of peace propaganda, Josephine's reference to a war-ship sounds hysterical. Yet if conditions do not mend, may not the rest of civilization properly unite in requesting the Hague Conference to consider whether Italy's internal policy of non-interference against those who pilfer from the stranger within her borders can be justified either as a tariff law or a Workmen's Compensation Act for the relief of Industrial Sneak Thieves?

## XII

AS every one knows, there is no brass or paper checking system in England. One's luggage travels without apparent identification; and the constant mystery is why it is not carried off by chance or design. Yet such mishaps are so infrequent, and the energetic contrition shown so superlatively efficient when they do occur, that the recording visitor instinctively sets down on his tablets with other commonplaces, like the courtesy and discipline of the London police, at whose slightest gesture the entire traffic of a neighborhood pauses or proceeds on the instant, the triumph of a method which to the uninitiated eye appears haphazard.

From such surface indications of firmly established order, an unsuspecting grandfather from across the seas, seeking immunity from problems in an automoblie, might well expect to be unmolested by the brotherhood of man. Were there problems here which a triumvirate

so eminent as Scotland Yard, an Established Church, and the *Times* could not solve to every one's satisfaction? So it came as a shock to my sensibilities, already agreeably smoothed by a panorama of the landscape at thirty miles an hour, to hear from my daughter-in-law Lavinia's brother, Luther Hubbard, whom we encountered at Gloucester just after we left the cathedral and were strolling through the close, that the House of Lords was to be abolished within a few days, and that he had applied for a ticket to our ambassador so as to be in at the death. If I would join him in London, he would try to squeeze me in. He added gleefully: "This strike of the dockmen and railway porters which has tied up traffic so tight is a protest against starvation wages. The English aristocracy are in the last ditch. Their only hope of delaying the popular programme lies in distracting public attention by a war. But the Jewish bankers who control the finances of Christendom won't let them fight."

Musing over this sensational announcement, somewhat sadly I must confess, for I had planned

to exhibit the House of Lords to my grandchildren before the end of our travels, I returned to the hotel where I found a letter, the tenor of which was very melancholy, from Hugh Armitt Dawson, who had preceded us by six weeks for the coronation festivals, written from the ancestral country seat of his son-in-law, the Earl of Batterbrook.

“England”(he wrote) “is in a bad way. Her institutions, the best in the world, are tottering to a fall, their foundations sapped by this infernal wave of radicalism. Poverty through taxation stares the landed proprietor in the face, and the death duties are so onerous that any one with ready money is hastening to invest it in America, where, in spite of government hostility to corporations for political effect, we have a little sense left. The English radical has none. I used to think the lot of English gentlemen the most enviable in the world. To-day, alas, even the climate seems in revolt, for the vegetation is burned yellow from drought, the heat is abnormal, and the nation is afflicted by a plague of wasps.”

To a grandfather, one of whose chief objects in crossing the ocean was to escape all problems, but especially those appertaining to the betterment of human conditions, these disclosures were dismally disturbing. A sudden panic seized me, the ruling impulse of which, far from being a desire to take sides, was the eager resolve to behold as many landmarks as possible before they vanished forever. For what was the House of Lords but a symbol? Would not its abolition necessarily involve the disappearance of most of the beautiful and inspiring monuments which we had come expressly to see? We are here in the nick of time, I reflected, and it is fortunate that an automobile will enable us to cover a large area. Otherwise the progress of the brotherhood of man might demolish everything historic before we could feast our eyes on it.

Under the spur of this narrow escape from missing so many of the impressions which I wished my grandchildren to experience, I found myself, despite previous chronic faith in the social doctrines of which human brotherhood is the



goal, harboring a revolutionary or, more aptly speaking, reactionary frame of mind. "A plague on the brotherhood of man—for the time being," I soliloquized. If there was one point of view which I had hoped to leave behind me, it was the perspective which would see in every landmark only an emblem of the oppression of the weak by the mighty or an outlet for social service. Indeed, so obstreperous became my mood that, as I resumed my touring goggles, I not merely closed every avenue to my brain against an access of concern for the down-trodden, but deliberately sought to foster telepathic sympathy with some of the most splendidly arrogant and egoistic characters who have ever lived. When, at Canterbury, Josephine stood rooted by pity and early piety at the spot where the saintly but cantankerous Becket was assailed by his cowardly murderers, I felt a glow of kinship with Henry which informed me that, in his shoes, I, too, might have murmured, "Is there no one who will rid me of this troublesome priest?" And I will own, as I stood with my grandchildren before Tantallon's battered towers

and bearded by rote the Douglas in his hall (though no copy of "Marmion" could be discovered in golf-ridden North Berwick), that I would fain have recalled the disreputable but valorous hero to life, that he might wreak the awful vengeance which he outlined before expiring on the triumvirate who immured his wanton but adoring Constance de Beverly.

It requires some moral courage, in an age when the trial balance of one's daily emotions is supposed to include constant solicitude for those who work for starvation wages, to abandon one's self to a reckless spirit of Christian charity toward picturesque despots who squandered all they could clutch, and romantic villains who broke like perfect gentlemen all the ten commandments, especially the sixth and the tenth. Save for the incentive supplied by the alarming disclosures at Gloucester, I should never have revelled in an historical horizon rid of every scruple—a mental attitude which (if not forbidden by law as noxious to morals) I can eagerly recommend to those who follow our itinerary. This frame of mind served me as a lode-

star and rejuvenator as we pursued our course past the mouth of the Severn and along the lovely Wye and through deep valleys of surpassing beauty, o'er the grandest of which towered Snowdon, and paused amid the fascinating ruins of Raglan Castle and Harlech to repicture portcullis, drawbridge, and all the grisly glories of armored knighthood. So freely, indeed, did I revel in the mood that, on the night we rested at charming Bettws-Y-Coed before leaving Wales, my granddaughter, Dorothy Perkins, summed up my tendencies to quote poetry by the yard and to brandish my staff as a battle-axe in the words:

"It's lucky grandpapa didn't live then, or he would have waded up to his saddle-bows in gore."

They had never suspected me of it. Nor did they suspect that the cunning old grandfather on the rampage, who had thrown to the winds for the nonce Trusts and Syndicates, Workingmen's Compensation Acts and Old-Age Pensions, Knights of Labor and Industrial Magnates, was liable to develop method in his madness. When by degrees they learned to tolerate and even

rather enjoy my quotations I felt that I had gained the first vantage point in an endeavor to make them realize democracy's—and especially American democracy's—indifference to background. A hard task in my case, for my grandson's complacency had received a fresh fillip from the boast of a keen but busy fellow-countryman, whom he had encountered just after landing, that one can see London completely in a single day in a taxicab and miss nothing; which so impressed Harold that he apologized for his failure, after playing thirty-six holes at golf at Stoke Pogis, to visit the church-yard of Gray's *Elegy*, almost within a brassy shot of the fair green. And the excuse seemed to him exhaustive—he had to catch the train.

The ambition to wade up to the saddle-bows in gore, be it at the instance of one's liege lord or merely to give the finishing touches to one's bitterest foe, is at least imaginative, however truculent. Even the historic sense of the poet who penned

“Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind”

would shrink from the smug and cautious inertia which sees in all adventure nothing but an interference with individual creature comfort. Yet having aroused the attention of my companions, I found the surroundings inviting me to soften the warlike note when, leaving the Rows of walled Chester behind us, we sped through the modern marts, Preston and Lancaster, into the romantic solitudes of Westmoreland and Cumberland—solitudes peopled by the ever-living genius of the immortal dead despite the horde of stall-fed pilgrims. Again in spirit, though not literally (for the cost of the automobile was £5 per diem), “I climbed the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn” and had a narrow escape from collision with the brotherhood of man as I reached the lines

“When a prince to the fate of the peasant has yielded,  
The tapestry waves dark round the dim-lighted hall;  
With scutcheons of silver the coffin is shielded,  
And pages stand mute by the canopied pall:  
Through the Courts at deep midnight the torches are  
gleaming;  
In the proudly arched chapel the banners are beaming;  
Far adown the long aisle sacred music is streaming,  
Lamenting a chief of the people should fall.”

Fortunately the interest of Dorothy and Harold in "the young gentleman of talents" who perished by losing his way and whose remains were found three months later still guarded by a faithful terrier, prevented any further reference to the funeral pomp of the "idle" (then "haughty") rich. But Harold's legal mind could not refrain from the inquiry, "How did the dog manage to keep alive?"

Yet still I persevered—for they were making progress in spite of occasional slips. As I have intimated, Josephine will linger in a church indefinitely, spellbound by the endeavor to discover evidences of the Norman, Early English, and Perpendicular under the same roof. So I have acquired the habit of slipping out after a decent interval into the church-yard, where it is more peaceful and the atmosphere is fresher, and where I often find myself in nearer communion with the illustrious dead than when I gaze on them in effigy. The little church at Grasmere is as simple and rustic as the vision of Poor Susan. But the solemn moment came when I stood with my grandchildren in a grassy

angle and looked down on the graves of the Wordsworths—the resting-place of William and his wife marked by a single stone, his sister Dorothy, his daughter Dora, and his other children close beside them, while but a step beyond the reverently musing eye beholds with astonishment and then with joy the horizontal slab to the memory of Arthur Hugh Clough, who sleeps just outside the walls of Florence. How strange yet stirring an association, this of the pious poet of exalted meditation and the entranced but perplexed poet of wistful doubt!

“What voice did on my spirit fall,  
Peschiera when thy bridge I crost?  
“Tis better to have fought and lost,  
Than never to have fought at all”

Thus I quoted. But though my grandchildren betrayed no impatience, the lines were evidently new to them. Clough? Arthur Hugh Clough? Dorothy Perkins had seen the name in the anthologies, but had read it as if rhyming with plough.

“I see, now,” she said, “it’s just like chough—the birds which are always calling in desolate



English love poetry, and would be crows, as you explained the other day, but for their red beaks and legs and toes."

I did not choose at the moment to compete with orthoepy and natural history; but later I recited for them "Say not the struggle naught availeth" and "As ships, becalmed at eve, that lay" on that marvellous summer evening when the elements united to make Lake Windermere the loveliest spot on earth. While the mellow twilight lingered I rowed Josephine on the tranquil roseate waters in the spirit of youth. We watched the radiance slowly fade out and deepen until the stars appeared and only a faintly glowing fringe of caramel defined the undulating mountain line. Then exchanging our shallow skiff for the launch in which the others were disporting, we wooed the whispering stillness of the night until the moon rose behind a tall black belt of trees and shed its heavenly lustre far and wide.

The young read Clough no more—so alluring to us because he epitomized the anguish of the soul which revolts with fervor but reluctance

from orthodoxy. We are constantly told that the America of to-day is more deeply imbued with the spirit of religion than ever before. In spite of the absences of my grandchildren (and yours) from the Protestant churches, this is undeniably true if it means that human nature is more insistently curious as to its origin and destiny and more sensitive as to mundane moral responsibilities. You will recall the plaint of the Rev. Bradley Mason, that social service must not be made a substitute for religion. Yet, we are all aware that the divines of every creed have received a hurry call to the effect that the fate of the Christian Church will be atrophy if it declines to modify its traditional "stand pat" policy in respect to appalling human conditions.

No grandfather, however obtuse, can fail to observe, despite the building of cis-Atlantic cathedrals and the creation of cardinals, the many signs of ferment in the orthodox firmament. The Church of Rome stands calmly recalcitrant—but no one of my grandchildren shows the slightest symptoms of conversion. As for the other creeds, it is significant that the clergy are throw-

ing away their impedimenta, as rapidly as is consistent with avoiding a trial for heresy, in order to proceed in light marching order. "That isn't one of the fundamental essentials—but for obvious reasons don't mention my name," has become the favorite pastoral formula. Consequently it would be unsafe to conclude—and I as a progressive grandfather am far from believing—that the absence of our grandchildren from the churches, whether because they do not credit what they hear or of preference for week-end recreation, is indicative of a lack of aspiration or serious ideals. But the youth of half-a century ago is constantly impressed by the subsidence of the torments of doubt. From such a different angle does the world approach polemics to-day that people either believe or they do not; and the failure to succumb to faith has in the main ceased to involve that poignancy of distress which bade us vindicate the bitter glory of the reproach.

The puncturing of a tire during our cross-country run from Keswick to Durham by way of the Yorkshire moors permitted us to pause

at Bowes (the scene of Dotheboys Hall) and chance (for again my propensity to wander in graveyards stood me in good stead) upon this inscription:

“Roger Wrightson, jun’ and Martha Railton both of Bowes buried in one grave: He died in a fever and upon tolling his passing bell she cry’d out my heart is broke and in a few hours expired, purely through love.

March 15, 171 $\frac{1}{2}$ .”

There these lovers lie, the victims of parental opposition, just outside the west end of the church, directly under the bells, it is said, and unchronicled until their fell pathetic tragedy inspired a century and a half later David Mallet’s poem, “Edwin and Emma.”

The first attitude of my grandchildren was one of scepticism, Harold gravely pronouncing that Martha’s heart might have been congenitally weak, while Dorothy ascribed the weakness to her head, adding, “If she cared so desperately, why didn’t she elope like my namesake, Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall?” Yet it was interesting to observe how often that day they

returned to the episode notwithstanding the interest of our itinerary. Lunching at Barnard Castle (the scene of Rokeby), in the inn to which Dickens and "Phiz" resorted while gathering materials for *Nicholas Nickleby*, we could see directly across the way the shop which from the former owner's name and the huge timepiece which used to surmount it supplied a title for "Master Humphrey's Clock." A little later we were touring through the heart of a mining region, a landscape of smoky collieries, the animate figures of which were smutty-nosed miners who trudged past us with bare legs above their woollen socks.

Lack of romantic sensibility—is not this a third charge which our democratic age must meet? No grandfather but a misanthrope would venture to insinuate that love no longer makes the world go round. Yet I could see that this quaint record from the past had cast a spell over my grandchildren despite their incredulity, and that they were wondering whether the youths and maidens of to-day love so ardently and completely as those of long ago. And if they enter-

tain a wistful doubt, may not a philosopher detect as causes the modern solicitude for material comfort, more exacting than the world has ever known, which erects a frowning barrier between mating souls, and the falling thermometer in woman's bosom, first fruits of her emancipation, which congeals fancy into matter of fact wisdom at the expense of all her radiant follies? Thus it happens that to save all else many miss the great adventure—life's most precious experience—though the price be sometimes a broken heart.

So we came to Durham cathedral, the noblest exemplar of Norman columns inviolate, and under the shelter of sanctuary foregathered with St. Cuthbert and The Venerable Bede. Thence downward by Ripon and lovely Fountain's Abbey to stately York minster, a pilgrimage through English cathedral land which did not terminate until Josephine had gazed at Canterbury on the seat of Becket's shrine.

One need not dote like her on triforiums and clerestories to bow the knee in speechless homage to the master harmony of beauty and aspiration which these slowly crumbling monu-

ments symbolize. What wealth of imaginative and poetic ardor, of adoring faith and lavish penitence—quintessence of noblest human emotions—their soaring lives express! No mushroom growth, these solemn, splendid churches—the imitative conception of a hasty mechanical age—but the handiwork of dreamy centuries, rising slowly, stone on stone, responsive to the touch of inspired genius, though the hand which commissioned it was steeped in blood. Our pageant-instructed eyes behold again the mighty tyrant kings, proud priests, and gallant knights which peopled them, in all their gorgeous ceremony, and, musing, ask if the spirit of creative beauty has vanished forever with those sanguinary but imaginative aristocrats of crown and church. When will democracy, the spires of whose cathedral are the yearnings of the common heart, its corner-stone the brotherhood of man, evolve the genius which will interpret once more to the outer eye in transcendent terms of artistic beauty its sound but disillusionizing creed?

Spellbound by the sacred aisles and arches



which tell of human searching for the infinite, the rising generation fails not to note, nevertheless, the ruthless signs of the challenging spirit. The church pavements stripped of their brass effigies record the march of sacrilege, the reproach of which my grandchildren are told by more than one confidential verger rests on Thomas Cromwell, servant of a rapacious monarch, no less than on Oliver Cromwell, advance agent of the brotherhood of man. Among the countless names impiously scored on the sculptured tombs of the illustrious dead, sparing neither saint nor crusader, we stumble in Westminster Abbey on that of no less famous a scribbler than Izaak Walton, cut in 1658.

At least there is no illusion as we pause to read amid the vast spaces of St. Paul's the late inscription, "who at all times and places gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, and his heart to God." It was well that my grandchildren should linger of their own accord by the cenotaph of the warrior-saint, Gordon. For what crumbling marble in all England commemorates one

more possessed by the poetic fire of true chivalry? "A veray parfit gentil knight" in the first crusade of the brotherhood of man.

I should have carried away this as the last memory of Josephine's and my holiday but for our taxi-cab driver who, on our way to the station (and we were not pressed for time), barely escaped running down a poor devil of a pedestrian who was doing his utmost to avoid him.

"Yes," said the despot gloomily when I touched on his good fortune. "Some people have no respect for property. If that fellow had hit me, it would have taken the paint off my radiator."

Thus my final conviction, as I turned my face homeward, happened to be that the vested interests over there are likely to be in the saddle for some time to come despite the emasculation of the House of Lords. But what a pity that they have lost so much of the old picturesqueness!



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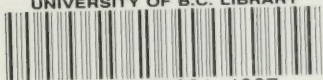








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